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The world of animated films and comic art

Funnyworld

No. 17 $2.50

Drawn especially for Funnyworld by Chuck Jones

The Disney Studio in World War II
New Animated Features • Dick Huemer Writing a History of U.S. Cartoons

Zander's Animation parlour

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The Story Behind The Cover

Sometime during the 1977-78 television season, there will be a reunion of sorts, when some of the principal Warner Brothers cartoon characters participate in a re-telling of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Substitute "rabbit" for "Yankee," and Daffy Duck for King Arthur, and Yosemite Sam for Merlin, and so on down the line, and you get the general idea.

A Connecticut Rabbit was directed by Chuck Jones, who is no stranger to all-star spectacles with the Warner characters; he directed one of the best, *The Scarlet Pumpernickel*, in 1951. "One of the best" is not really adequate praise, since *The Scarlet Pumpernickel* could also be described as "one of the few." The Warner cartoons were low-budget jobs, at least by comparison with the Disney cartoons, and two-character cartoons were the rule; Jones' famous Road Runner series is the classic example.

Actually—and remarkably—the Warner characters have appeared together in all-star productions about as often since the cartoon studio closed in 1962 as they did in all the preceding years. The Filmation studio was, for a while, entrusted with the Warner characters, and made one terrible hour-long show for Saturday-morning TV in 1973. In April of this year, Bugs Bunny and most of the other characters took part in an Easter special that was an uneasy mixture of old theatrical footage and new bits. The new material was written in part by Friz Freleng, and directed in part by Robert McKimson; they were—with Jones—the Warner "troika" of cartoon directors in the '50s. Jones has already used Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck in *The Carnival of the Animals*, telecast in November 1976, so all three members of the "troika" have been represented on TV recently with new versions of their old characters. Jones' *Connecticut Rabbit* will continue and expand upon this trend, by using a large cast in an all-new special.

Notably absent from the cast will be the Road Runner and the Coyote; Jones decided that using them would be "too gimmicky."

Front cover by Chuck Jones

Cartoon History	4
Disney in World War II	8
Roy Williams	33
Dick Huemer	37
Reviews	46

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Editorial

Funnyworld No. 16 appeared more than two years ago. I seriously doubted that there would be a *Funnyworld* No. 17, and I'm sure that the same is true of many of the magazine's readers. As I explained in my editorial in No. 16, *Funnyworld* was a money-losing proposition, and I had found no way to turn it around. The magazine was caught in a vicious circle: it lost money, in part, because it was published so infrequently, and it was published infrequently because I lacked the resources to publish it more often. Every magazine needs a healthy shove to get started, in the form of financial backing to keep it afloat until it can establish itself, and this is what *Funnyworld* has lacked.

Now, that shortcoming has been remedied. The magazine has in effect been sold to Mark Lilien, a young New York businessman (although he has really acquired nothing except a small subscription list and the *Funnyworld* name). By contract, editorial control of the magazine, and copyrights on it, will remain in my hands, but Mark will take over the business end—subscription fulfillment, production, distribution, advertising, and all the rest. Each of us will be concentrating on what he does best.

Funnyworld will be appearing on a quarterly schedule. That is ambitious, for a magazine that has had difficulty appearing once a year, but it should be manageable. For one thing, now that the magazine is on a sound financial footing, I will be able to pay contributors, starting next issue. The payments will not be large, at first, but I expect them to become large enough to attract a steady flow of quality material. I hope to be publishing original comics, as well as articles, interviews, reviews, and other material of interest to *Funnyworld's* special readership.

By paying contributors, and accepting advertising, and appearing on a regular schedule, *Funnyworld* will be breaking out of the fanzine ghetto—to my great relief. There will probably be a few readers who will regret the loss of a certain purity, or innocence, or something (a few readers complained when, many years ago, I switched from mimeograph to offset printing). I am not a purist, however; I want *Funnyworld* to reach an audience large enough to justify continuing it. I am proud of the standard that *Funnyworld* has set in the last four or five issues, and I expect to set even higher standards in the issues to come. As before, the magazine will promote serious—but not stuffy or pedantic—attention to the comics and animated films, with the emphasis on reliable information about them. I have heard suggestions that I should expand the magazine's coverage into other aspects of the popular arts, but there is still a great deal to be said about what the magazine's logo calls "the world of animated films and comic art," and *Funnyworld's* focus will remain the same; these days, the quickest way for a magazine to kill itself is by spreading itself too thin, and *Funnyworld* will not make that mistake under my editorship.

There will be other publications appearing under *Funnyworld's* banner in the next year or so. The long-delayed Carl Barks bibliography is almost complete; at this point, my only real problem is finding time to pull all the pieces together. The delays—while aggravating—have at least given me the time to turn up additional information about Barks' career, and especially his work at Disney's.

A detailed filmography of American theatrical cartoons is also in the mill; this book will provide credits, summaries, and critical evaluations for thousands of cartoons, and should be available at about the same time as my animation history for Oxford University Press (more about that on the next page). As for *Funnyworld* itself, the contents of the next few issues are falling into place; the highlight of No. 18 will be a comprehensive article on cartoon voices by Hames Ware and Graham Webb.

Now, for the first time, I am really hopeful about *Funnyworld's* future. The magazine is going to go places, and I hope you will be along for the ride.

Mike Barrier

Writing a History Of American Cartoons

By MIKE BARRIER

In the spring of 1973, I signed a contract with Oxford University Press to write a history of American animated cartoons, with the emphasis on animation's "Golden Age," the '30s and '40s. At the time, I thought that it would take about two years to write the book. I reasoned that the written material on cartoons was scanty, so reading all of it would not be time-consuming. I reasoned further that interviews with about 50 people would give me a reasonably good picture of the inner workings of the industry; that total was well within reach, since I had already interviewed about 20 people for *Funnyworld*. The big problem, I thought, was to see all the cartoons I needed to see, since there were still sizable gaps in my knowledge of various studios' films.

Four years and a couple of thousand cartoons later, the gaps are close to being filled. I wasn't too far wrong in my estimate of what I needed to see. But in all other respects, I was way off the mark.

For one thing, the research and writing will have taken five years, rather than two, by the time I submit the manuscript to Oxford in 1978. (Fortunately, I have a publisher that is interested more in quality than in promptness.) I began in 1969 to gather material that will be used in the book (I made my first trip to Los Angeles then, and recorded interviews with Chuck Jones, Ward Kimball, Bob Clampett and a few other people), so the book will actually have been in the works for about ten years when it is published in 1979.

The written material about animation, far from being skimpy, is overwhelming in its bulk. It ranges from articles in mass magazines and newspapers, to trade-paper items, to government records, to so-called "primary sources" — the reams of paper that moved within each studio as the cartoons were produced.

It is only since moving to Washington in 1973 that I have discovered how much material there is in the first three categories; the Library of Congress, the National Archives and other government agencies have great quantities of relevant publications and documents. (For example, did you know that a patent examiner turned down J. R. Bray's initial application for a patent on animation processes, on the ground that Winsor McCay had used them before Bray?) I am still plowing through all of this stuff, and I will probably not finish with it until the day before my manuscript is completed — if then.

It is the primary sources that are frequently the most helpful, as well as the most difficult to locate. Some of this material has been preserved in libraries and archives of various kinds — most notably in the Walt Disney Archives — but the bulk of it remains in private hands, and tracking it down and copying it has been one of the most exhilarating (and sometimes exasperating) aspects of my research. The best such material can open doorways into the past as nothing else can. Thanks to documents that have been loaned to me — or, in some instances, "donated to the cause"—I now know such things as how much Bill Tytla was paid when he went to work at the "Aesop's Fables" studio in March 1923, and what Walt Disney and Carl Barks said to one another in the story meeting on a Donald Duck cartoon on February 29, 1940.

Courtesy of Art Davis

Charles Mintz is one of the shadowy figures who is coming into focus as work on the book progresses.

As the written material of all kinds accumulates, almost every piece sheds light on another, establishing connections and revealing processes that I previously could only guess at. One of its most important functions has been to stimulate questions for interviews. Interviews have fallen into some disrepute in the last few years, because so many film "researchers" have abused them, by accepting and publishing clearly inaccurate statements. Readers have been at fault, too; they have been all too prone to accept the printed interview as gospel, rather than as an individual's memories of events that may have taken place 40 or 50 years earlier. A backlash against interviews has set in, and I doubt seriously that a book like Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By ...*, which is essentially a collection of interviews, would be received as warmly now as it was when it was published in 1968.

There is, however, nothing wrong with interviews in themselves; they are frequently our only way to enter a past that is otherwise lost to us. The problem instead is with interviewers who (a) don't prepare adequately, (b) don't check the interviewee's statements against other sources, and (c) don't interview enough people. I have been guilty of the first two sins, and I would have been guilty of the third, if I had not altered my research plans to include far more interviews than I originally thought would be sufficient. The book will now draw on interviews with at least 150 people, instead of 50. Most of these interviews will have been conducted face to face, although some will have been conducted by phone or through the mail.

The list of people who have been in-

terviewed now includes about 120 names:

Ed Aardal, Ray Abrams, Ken Anderson, Mike Arens, Roger Armstrong, Gus Arriola, Tex Avery, Art Babbitt, Ed Barge, Carl Barks, Ed Benedict, Dick Bickenbach, Lee and Mary Blair, Preston Blair, Mel Blanc, Billy Bletcher, Ray Bloss, Jim Bodrero, Steve Bosustow, Jack Boyd, Jack Bradbury, Scott Bradley, J. R. Bray, Homer Brightman, Bernard Brown, Jack Brunner, Daws Butler, Bob Carlson, Bob Clampett, Les Clark, Chuck Couch, Art Davis, Marc Davis, Eldon Dedini, Phil Dike, Gene and Bernyce Fleury, Hugh Fraser, Friz Freleng, John Gentilella, Gerry Geronimi, Arnold Gillespie, Bob Givens, George Goepper, Mo Gollub, George Gordon, Campbell Grant, Joe Grant;

David Hand, Bill Hanna, Jack Hannah, Hugh Harman, T. Hee, Stod Herbert, Dave Hilberman, Cal Howard, John Hubley, Dick Huemer, Bill Hurtz, Rudolf Ising, Wilfred Jackson, Ollie Johnston, Chuck Jones, Paul Julian, Don Jurwich, Milt Kahl, Ward Kimball, Jack Kinney, Herb Klynn, Ruth Kneitel, Mike Lah, Walter Lantz, Eric Larson, Gordon Legg, Bill Littlejohn, Ed Love, Harry Love, Dick Lundy, Mike Maltese, Sid Marcus, Carman Maxwell, Norm McCabe, Bob McKimson, Dan MacManus, Jack Mercer, Otto Messmer, Dave Monahan, Phil Monroe, Ken Muse, Grim Natwick, Maurice Noble, Edwin Parks, Ray Patterson;

Virgil Ross, Leo Salkin, Milt Schaffer, Don Selders, Ben Sharpsteen, Gordon Sheehan, Charlie Shows, Paul Sommer, Irv Spence, Carl Stalling, McLaren Stewart, Bob Stokes, Howard Swift, Frank Tashlin, Dave Tendlar, Frank Thomas, Edith Vernick, Ben Washam, Tiger West, Don Williams, Bemy Wolf, Cornett Wood, Adrian Woolery, and Ralph Wright.

Another 10 or 12 names will have been added to the list by the time this issue of *Funnyworld* is published.

The average interview runs two to three hours on tape, but many of these people have sat for more than one interview, and in some cases the total time on tape approaches 20 hours. In addition to giving me their time, many interview subjects have loaned me documents, photographs and artwork, and have helped in other ways; all of these contributions will be spelled out in the book itself.

I have taped a majority of the interviews myself; but it would have been impossible for me to draw on the memories of so many people without the assistance of Milton Gray, a young animator who is also my co-editor on *Funnyworld*. Milt and I began corresponding in 1966, when

Courtesy of Pat Leahy

On this page and the following two pages are a few publicity photos – examples of the many photos, both candid snapshots and publicity glossies, that have turned up as research on the Oxford book has continued. In this photo from the '20s, Paul Terry (right) and silent film comedian Charley Chase pretend to sketch one another.

he was just breaking into animation as an in-betweener at the Disney studio. Two and a half years later, when I recorded my first interview (with Mel Blanc, in June 1969), Milt was along, and he has since taken part in most of the interviews I have recorded myself. In the last two years, Milt has recorded a few dozen interviews for me, on his own, working in part from questions I have suggested but relying more on his own vast knowledge of the industry and its history. In this case — as in many others — Milt's help has been invaluable to me.

Even 150 people are, of course, only a few of the thousands who have worked in animation since its beginnings early in this century. Subtract those who have died, or who weren't in a position to see much of what was going on around them, or who don't want to talk, or who have simply disappeared into the woodwork, and several hundred worthy interview subjects, at least, are left. Since there is no way I can talk to all of these people, at least for the first edition of the book (a second edition will probably appear a few years after the first), the problem becomes one of locating the people who have the most interesting things to say. There is, alas, no foolproof method for doing this. Every interview that Milt and I have recorded has contained some information of value; but some have been less productive than we had expected, and others vastly more so. Our expectations have been confounded so many times that we cannot put our faith in any single system for seeking out the best interview subjects. There is a basic list of several dozen important figures, and we have interviewed all but two or three of those; it is the lesser-known people in the industry who are so difficult to sort through. Many of them have more to tell us than a lot of the "big names" do, but locating the right people is still more a matter of accident than of design. One person we have interviewed may recommend someone else; a name may look promising because it's in the credits of some good cartoons; a mutual friend may act as a go-between; and so on. It is, unavoidably, hit or miss, and Milt and I are both nagged by the fear that we will overlook people who could really be helpful; but no other method holds the promise of any better results. Our fears have been aggravated by the deaths of people whom we knew we wanted to talk to, such as Don Graham, Manny Gould, Jim Tyer, John Lounsbery, Irv Spector, and Bernard Garbutt. Sometimes we have come agonizingly close: the late Roy Williams entered the hospital a few hours before Milt and I were to have seen him, and he died 10 days later, before a second date for an interview could be arranged.

Our one basic rule is that we are trying to talk to a healthy sampling of the people who worked at each major studio — 20 or 30, at least, for each studio, and for Disney's closer to 100. (There is overlap, of

Courtesy of Friz Freleng

The Warner cartoon studio held "jam sessions" in which the directors and their story men critiqued one another's work. In this 1951 photo, Mike Maltese, story man for Chuck Jones, is at the board (the story is Hasty Hare*); in the front row, left to right, are Jones, director Friz Freleng, producer Edward Selzer, and Selzer's secretary; in the second row are story man Tedd Pierce, director Robert McKimson, story man Warren Foster, and John Burton, production manager and later producer. Below, the notes taken by the secretary at such a meeting, on* Duck Amuck.

Courtesy of Chuck Jones

#1240 - "DAFFY PULL" (tentative) - JONES - MALTESE - FEBRUARY 15, 1951

USE "SCENERY" INSTEAD OF "BACKGROUND"

"THIS WEEKS OF SABOTAGE"

START OUT WITH AN ACTUAL BACKGROUND FOR A MUSKETEER PICTURE.

PIRATE'S CHEST

"WHERE'S THE REST OF ME?"

"GIMME A BOAT." ARTIST DRAWS A BOAT. BACKGROUND CHANGES AND DAFFY ROWS BOAT ACROSS MOUNTAINS AND DESERT.

"GIMME SOMETHING WITH OARS." THROWS HIM ANVIL WITH OARS.

USE JUST BRUSH INSTEAD OF HAND AND BRUSH.

DAFFY IS UP ON A GIRDER PAINTING BUILDING. REMOVE BUILDING.

DAFFY IS IN AIRPLANE. DRAWS SPIGOT ON GAS TANK, GAS RUNS OUT. DAFFY BAILS OUT, ARTIST ERASES PARACHUTE. HE'S GOING TO LAND IN A HAYSTACK, ARTIST ERASES HAYSTACK.

AS DAFFY CLIMBS UP LADDER TO BALCONY, ARTIST DRAWS A CANNON AND DAFFY IS BLASTED.

DAFFY IS DRIVING IN A CAR RACE AND IS WINNING. HAND COMES IN AND THUMBTACKS HIS CAR WHILE REST PASS HIM UP.

"RUB HIM OUT."

DAFFY IS HANDED AN OSCAR...JUST WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS WANTED. HAND COMES IN, DRAWS FUSE ON IT, AND IT GOES OFF.

DAFFY IS IN AIRPLANE -- HAND DRAWS LANDSCAPE IN SIDEWAYS.

ART GUM ERASER TO SAVE HIM FROM FALL.

OSCAR BLOWS UP, BUT NO SOUND. DAFFY SAYS: "WELL?" AND THERE'S AN EXPLOSION.

OPEN CARTOON WITH DAFFY STRUMMING GUITAR. NO SOUND COMES OUT. HOLDS UP BACK OF GUITAR SAYING "VOICE, PLEASE". SOUND OF MACHINE GUN. SOUND OF WHOLE ORCHESTRA.

DAFFY SMASHES GUITAR AND THERE'S THE SPLASH OF WATER. "THAT DOES IT."

STAMPEDE SOUND AND A LITTLE FLY RUNS ACROSS THE SCREEN. DAFFY TAKES OUT FLY SWATTER AND THERE'S A BIG EXPLOSION.

DAFFY GRABS BRUSH, WRITES "THE END", DRAWS MOTORCYCLE, STEPS ON STARTER, EXPLOSION.
OR
BUGS IS SITTING IN AN OFFICE. DAFFY: "WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?" BUGS: "SHALL WE TELL HIM?"

course; some people have worked at just about any studio you could name.)

Interviewing so many people offers rewards in accuracy and understanding, but it holds its hazards, as well. One such hazard is, ironically, bound up in the very idea of using one interview as a check on another. On a number of occasions, I have asked someone if his memory conformed with another person's memory on a certain point, and I have been greeted with suspicion: am I trying to start a fight between two old colleagues? I'm not, of course; I'm trying to be accurate, and there must be some way to get that message across clearly. I hope I find it before my research is finished.

The larger problem posed by all these interviews is logistical. Interviews, to be useful, must be transcribed, and transcribing several hundred hours of tape is not a particularly entertaining way to spend one's time. I have really had no choice but to transcribe the tapes myself; they are filled with names and references that would baffle most people, and the cost of transcribing tapes is so high that farming the job out would be impossible financially even if I could locate a secretary who was also an avid cartoon fan.

I have been tempted at times to go out and search for a grant of some kind to help me get the tapes transcribed; a large grant is sometimes made for a single "oral history" that is more limited in scope than most of the interviews Milt and I have recorded. However, many such grants seem to be awarded through an elaborate system of mutual backscratching, and I have been loath to take the time away from my typewriter to scrabble for money in that way.

(In this connection, I am sadly amused at times when I realize that some people think I am working full time on this book, and am somehow reaping great financial rewards for writing it. Neither is true, unfortunately. I earn my living as an assistant to a U.S. Senator, and my rewards for working on the book have been meager, so far. My advance on royalties from Oxford was only $2,000—very small potatoes in today's publishing world — and that money has long since been eaten up by my research expenses. I hope and expect that the book will sell well enough to justify the time and money I have put into it, but Americans will have to display a previously undetected enthusiasm for books about animation if I am to get rich from this project.)

Once the tapes of an interview have been transcribed, my first step is to send copies of the transcript to the person who has been interviewed, so that he can

Courtesy of Mike Lah

Another studio, another storyboard: In this photo, taken at the MGM cartoon department around 1956, director Mike Lah (right) and layout man Ed Benedict give vent to mirth in front of the storyboard for One Droopy Knight.

make any necessary corrections. Some interviewers recoil in horror from such a procedure, and there have been times when someone I've interviewed has cut out "good stuff" — nothing scandalous, but anecdotes or comments that told me something I needed to know. Everyone in the animation business has worked with everyone else in the animation business, or so it seems — it is a small world — and a few people are deathly afraid of offending old colleagues. Usually, such precautions are unnecessary; Joe Blow isn't as thin-skinned as his old buddy thinks, and is fully capable of distinguishing comments on his work from aspersions on his character. But, in any case, the loss of such material is more than balanced by other material, which remains in the edited transcript because the person who was interviewed knew that he would not be misquoted.

The transcripts are of little use in themselves, of course; they must be put to work, They must be used as sources of questions for other interviews, and they must be matched with other pieces of information. This is all part of the larger task of marshalling facts into some semblance of order. Much of this must be done in my head, rather than on paper, until the book itself is finished. Keeping track of all the threads has become both easier and more difficult in the last two or three years — easier, because I now know so much more about animation in the Golden Age; and more difficult, because there are so many more facts to keep track of than there once were. I have been embarrassed, on more than one occasion, by asking someone a question (or *failing* to ask a question) that was answered (or raised) by a transcript, or article, or document, that I had neglected to check. (That's still not quite as bad as asking the same question twice of the same person; that has happened a few times, too.) To guard against such lapses, I have taken to keeping a large loose-leaf notebook, in which questions are listed for individuals as they occur to me. I keep another large notebook in which questions are listed by category (direction, animation, etc.) and by studio. Somehow, the questions multiply faster than the answers. But, at least, I now know which questions to ask, in most cases.

Researching and now writing this book has been both exciting and exhausting—and the excitement and exhaustion have tended to increase at the same rate. The exhaustion results, of course, from all the work to be done (and, sometimes, just from thinking about all the work that's left to do). The excitement comes from knowing that my book will shed much-needed light on some of the most obscure and controversial corners of animation's history — the Mintz and Screen Gems studios, the Disney strike, the military cartoons made in World War II, the early days of UPA, for a few examples —as well as providing a great deal of new or freshly documented information on such familiar territory as the Disney and Warner cartoons. Beyond that, my study of animation history has yielded lessons about a great many subjects, from the fine arts to labor relations.

What has made it all worthwhile, though, is the films themselves. They are the final measuring stick against which every other source — interview, document, article, whatever — must be tested. It is worth writing about the men and women who made the cartoons because the cartoons themselves are so often extraordinary. Ultimately, I will count my book a success only if it helps audiences to see those cartoons more clearly.

Although work on my book is nearing completion, I still need help of many kinds. Time for additional interviews is growing short, but Milt Gray and I want to talk to anyone in the industry whose experiences were such that he can illuminate part of its history; if you are such a person, or know of such a person, please let us hear from you.

I can never have enough documents — memos, letters, story meeting notes, contracts, bar sheets, drafts, exposure sheets, in-house newsletters, and the like. The same is true of artwork — photographs, drawings, background paintings, model sheets, and so on. The more such material I have at my disposal — originals or copies — the more solid, accurate, and well illustrated the book will be. If you have any such material that you think would be useful, please let me know.

There are a number of people who have worked in the industry whose whereabouts are a mystery to me. Some may have died; others, I'm sure, left the industry years ago. In any case, I'd like to know what has happened to them, and how to get in touch with them, if they're still living. The names are:

Sam Armstrong, Aurelius Battaglia, Robert Bentley, Treg Brown, Jack Campbell, Ben Clopton, Jack Cosgrif, Chuck Daggett, Maurice (Jake) Day, Nelson Demorest, Joe D'Igalo, Phil Eastman, A. C. Gamer, Nick George, Phil de Guard, Ben Harrison, Tex Henson, Rich Hogan, Fred Kopietz, Lou Lilly, Larry Martin, Melvin (Tubby) Miller, Tom Morrison, Milt Neil, John Niendorff, Elmer Plummer, Thor Putnam, Art Riley, Dun Roman, Louis Schmitt, Claude Smith, and Gil Turner.

Finally, I would like to get in touch with any widows, or other relatives of deceased workers in the industry, who may have memories, or documents, or artwork, that they would be willing to share. Too many people in the industry have died without receiving adequate recognition for what they did, and I hope to rectify that, as much as possible.

My address and telephone number are 226 N. Saint Asaph, Alexandria, Va. 22314, (703) 549-3684. Milt Gray can be reached in Los Angeles at (213) 980-2556, and by mail at P.O. Box 1173, Burbank, Calif. 91505.

Mike Barrier

ARE YOU A PATRIOTIC AMERICAN?
YES SIR!
AS RADIO - EAGER TO DO YOUR PART?
WHO ME!?
THEN THERE IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT YOU CAN DO -
IT WILL BE OF VITAL HELP TO YOUR COUNTRY IN THIS HOUR OF NEED
I'LL DO ANYTHING - ANYTHING!!
INCOME TAX!
RADIO - YOUR INCOME TAX!
IT MAY NOT SEEM IMPORTANT TO YOU - BUT IT IS IMPORTANT -
CH 301 - TAXES TO BEAT THE AXIS!!
O.K. LETS GO -
"NOW YOU JUST NEED YOUR TAX BLANK -"
SATURATE YOU-SELF BIG BOY!
HALT YOUR MIND ADDRESS AND DISCUSSION
ACTION!
RADIO - NOW - LIST YOUR DEPENDENTS - YOUR DEPENDENTS -
RADIO - NOW WHAT WAS YOUR INCOME
(1040) "TOTAL INCOME IS EXACTLY $2,965.12"
RADIO - NOW YOU ARE SINGLE WITH DEPENDENTS
DON - YES SIR.
1. THEN JUST LOOK IN COLUM "B"
2. - OKAY -
AND YOU'LL FIND IT ALL WORKED OUT FOR YOU
SIGN HERE -
"WHAT'S THAT?"
"MAIL IT IN EARLY!"
"BE ONE OF THE FIRST TO GET YOURS IN' -
OK- SO LONG..
SWISH

Part of the storyboard for *The New Spirit*, from *Life* of March 16, 1942; ©Walt Disney Productions

Donald Duck Joins Up

The Walt Disney Studio During World War II

By RICHARD SHALE

Text © Richard Shale

Prelude: Nineteen forty-one was a dismal time financially for the Walt Disney Studio, and the fiscal year ended with a deficit of over one million dollars. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, Disney had distributed his films to 55 countries, but now much of the foreign market was collapsing rapidly. The expected foreign revenue for *Pinocchio* had failed to materialize, and the domestic roadshow release of *Fantasia* had been a failure.

In the spring of 1941, the studio began to reduce operating expenses and personnel, and the layoffs contributed to an already tense labor situation that culminated in a strike on May 28.

After nine weeks, the studio shut down completely, until a settlement was finally reached through arbitration. One person who was not present to witness the settlement of the strike was Walt Disney himself; he was in South America on September 12, 1941, the day the studio resumed operation. The reason for his trip had nothing to do with the labor problems at the studio, although, according to many accounts, his absence helped to cool passions and end the stalemate.

By the time Disney returned to the studio the strike had been over for five weeks; the financial problems still existed, however, and a general layoff was scheduled for November 26. Approximately 530 employees — less than half the pre-strike total — were to be retained after the layoffs.

A publicity release dated November 24, 1941, provides a valuable look at the state of the Disney Studio just prior to America's entry into World War II. No letup in the shorts production was scheduled, though many animators were to be assigned to new characters that were being developed out of the material gathered in South America. Most revealing of how World War II affected the studio was the reshuffling of the release dates of five feature-length animations:

> "Peter Pan" is now slated to follow "Bambi," now near completion. "Bambi," ... will not be released until early spring, while "Peter Pan" will probably be completed by the end of 1942. Work on "Wind In the Willows" has been temporarily halted, to be resumed at a later date ... Production will also continue on two other features, "Bongo," a feature on Sinclair Lewis' story of a bear, and "Cinderella."

To say that the events of December 7, 1941, altered this schedule would understate the case. Although *Bambi* was released in 1942, *Peter Pan* would not reach the screen for 12 years, and *Cinderella* would wait nine years for its release date. *Bongo* was released in 1947 as part of *Fun and Fancy Free*, and *Wind In the Willows* appeared two years later, in 1949, as one half of *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad.*

1. The Military Moves In

Disney received his first military contract on December 8, 1941, but the idea that this was completely unexpected or unsolicited is a popular (and frequently quoted) misconception. He was already making a few war-related films for the Canadian government, and his trip to South America had been made at the suggestion of Nelson Rockefeller, the United States government's Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. (That trip led ultimately to two features, *Saludas Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros,* about which more will be said later.)

Leo Rosten, who had been Walt's guest at an April 1941 conference on using animation in instructional films, had relayed Disney's interest in the defense effort to Robert Horton, Director of Information for the Office of Emergency Management. Two days before Pearl Harbor, Horton had responded by inviting Walt to send some of his writers to Washington, where they could pick up some material that might be worked into some of the shorts. "This is not to suggest 'propaganda movies,'" wrote Horton, "but let me illustrate with a very small example. For instance, Donald Duck could, instead of going out for an evening of poker playing, go out for an evening of training as an air raid warden—he certainly has the voice for it. In other words, the picture would then reflect more accurately what is going on in real life today." Disney did not follow up on this offer, and fewer than half of the wartime entertainment shorts ever included such topical references.

Disney's first contract for government training films was the result of an exchange of letters between the studio and Lt. (j.g.) J.C. Hutchinson of the Navy Department Bureau of Aeronautics. Hutchinson had written the studio on November 28, outlining the need for a series of aircraft and warship identification films. On December 4, Robert Carr of the Disney Studio sent a carefully worded reply to the Navy, outlining point by point the advantages of using the Disney Studio facilities, and including several specific recommendations for the films. When Pearl Harbor came, the Navy knew exactly what Walt Disney had to offer.

Shortly after six o'clock on the evening of December 8, Walt received a call from Washington that would substantially alter the course of his studio's history. A Lieutenant Cottle of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, was calling to offer the Disney Studio a contract to produce 20 training films on aircraft and warship identification. In the December 4 letter from the studio to the Navy, Walt had recommended that this series of films be shot on 35mm, black and white film. He had correctly surmised that color was not necessary for this subject matter, though the 35mm width would be needed for the special effects and superimposed animation that was contemplated. Lieutenant Cottle verified the Navy's acceptance of these recommendations and also agreed that the Navy would assign an officer to the project as a consultant and would provide all models needed for filming.

Walt first offered to produce the films for $5,000 apiece but quickly lowered that to $4,500 when he learned the contract was for 20 films, instead of four as he had originally been told. "If we're doing 20," Walt said, "why then it could be brought way down, because your first set-up is a problem—to get the organization rolling." Each film was to run approximately 1,000 feet, which meant that Disney, whose films often ran up costs of several hundred dollars per foot, had just agreed to produce 20 films at $4.50 per foot. Both parties agreed to these terms, and Lieutenant Cottle told Walt, "Now, this constitutes a contract, Mr. Disney, and we have recorded the conversation for the purposes of making a contract." These identification films became known as the WEFT series, an acronym for Wings, Engine, Fuselage, and Tail.

It was one day after Pearl Harbor, and the Disney Studio, accustomed to spending two to three years on a 6,000-foot feature picture, suddenly found itself committed to turning out three times as much footage in the next six months. Time was very important, since the first pictures in the series were due in 90 days, and Lieutenant Hutchison, who would coordinate production and act as liaison, lost no time in arriving at the studio. Hutchison explained that the WEFT films should be prepared in the simplest possible way. Other pictures of a more technical nature would come later. The Navy would make naval bases, props, and personnel available at no cost and would see that the studio received a priority rating on any special materials needed to move the films through on schedule. The project was classified confidential, and certain security restrictions were introduced. (Subsequent projects would be top secret, and much more elaborate precautions would be taken.)

The first priority was to do one aircraft and one warship identification picture simultaneously. Animation Unit 2A was designated as the original unit, and Thor Putnam, Yale Gracey, and Bruce Bushman were among the first to be assigned to the project. Navy officials opposed the

use of humor in these films and Walt agreed that the military projects were no place for his well known characters. "We don't use The Mouse and The Duck in the training films," Disney explained. "Occasionally we put in a bit of humor. In an electronics film, for example, we used little figures to represent voltage and current. But humor is dangerous because the films have to be seen over and over again by the same people — and if a gag has been seen once, it's gone and becomes dull."

America's entry into the war produced other changes. The nearby Lockheed plant was expanding so rapidly that it quickly ran out of office space, and many offices at the Disney Studio were vacated for the duration so that Lockheed personnel could move in. Since the aircraft plant was a prime target for enemy bombers, anti-aircraft troops were quartered at the studio.

Though the Navy was the studio's first and, throughout most of the war, biggest customer, the Army Signal Corps, the Army Air Force, the Air Transport Command, and other service branches were soon doing business with Disney. By 1943, 94 percent of all the footage produced by the Disney Studio was done under government contract. Prior to the war, the studio's greatest annual output had been 37,000 feet of film. In the 1942-43 fiscal year, output jumped to 204,000 feet. This volume and degree of government involvement made the Disney Studio unique in Hollywood; no other studio even approached this wartime production. The home of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck became for the duration a genuine war plant, which operated under the Manning Table and Replacement Schedule administered by the War Manpower Commission.

This abrupt change from commercial to government pictures and from entertainment values to teaching values was difficult. As Carl Nater, production coordinator for Army and Navy films at the studio, pointed out, the shift was more mental than physical:

> The studio personnel had for many years been trained and admonished to adhere to a stringent quality standard . . . Since the birth of Mickey Mouse, it has been studio policy that quality must be the foremost consideration, even though this meant lengthening schedules and thus increasing costs. However, since December 7th, Disney studios has undergone a reevaluation of factors. Although quality is as much a part of training films as it is of theatrical films, wartime pressure has nevertheless forced it to ride in a "show" position behind price and schedule.

Film, because of its inherent capability to deliver a uniform message to large numbers of people, was considered ideal for training both soldiers and civilian defense workers. But in 1941, the field of the training film was largely an unexplored one, and no one quite knew what an ideal training film should consist of. What was the optimum length? Should the films have humor or be all business? Should they be designed for multiple screenings? Was color worth the added cost? Should the films conclude with a review session? The only value that everyone agreed on, expecially for the top-secret films for strategic warfare, was quick production.

This article is based on Richard Shale's doctoral dissertion in American Culture at the University of Michigan. The complete dissertation is much longer than this article, and includes chapters that could not be included here even in condensed form; in them are discussed such subjects as Disney's Canadian war bond films and the wartime theatrical shorts. The dissertation also includes the footnotes that had to be deleted here for lack of space. Copies of the dissertation can be purchased from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd. Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106; inquire of them for the current price. (A portion of the dissertation, dealing with the Canadian films, has also been published in Motion *magazine, Vol. 5, No. 3.)*

At the Disney Studio, the pressure of such deadlines fell unevenly on the various departments. The Camera Department began to operate 20 hours a day, six days a week (four hours per day were reserved for repairs and maintenance), but its *routine* did not change substantially as the footage increased. Except for this added volume, the Story Department also functioned much as it had prior to the war, as did the Sound Recording and Inking and Painting Departments. To ease the burden and avoid a production bottleneck in the latter department (which had the laborious and time-consuming task of preparing each cel), some of the animation units working on the simpler black and white military films had their own inkers and painters and could thus bypass the Inking and Painting Department altogether.

Other departments, however, faced more than a jump in volume and felt a greater burden. The Layout Department now had to deal with technical and mechanical problems that peacetime films had not prepared it for. To the Special Effects Camera Department fell the task of combining live-action and animation photography and of devising methods to cut costs and production time. Cutout drawings, once the standard of the industry before the widespread use of cel animation, and three-dimensional models were frequently employed because both methods bypassed the laborious inking and painting steps.

Studio artists with some background in commercial art were most likely to be assigned to the training films, where experience with an air brush was more important than expertise in character animation. These films were typified by diagrammatic animation on card backgrounds, though often no animation was used at all. For the *Aircraft Production Methods* series, 80 percent of the footage was live action shot on location.

Despite the efforts of the studio to negotiate terms that could realistically be met, contracts often had to be rewritten or amended. *Rules of the Nautical Road,* for example, originally called for a maximum of 15,000 feet of film at $6.98 per foot. This price proved to be too low, and when the contract was extended to include an additional 10,000 feet the price was upped to $12.75 per foot. Another Navy film, *Approaches and Landings,* was contracted at $7.44 per foot, but, when actual production costs turned out to be $11.25 per foot, the studio persuaded the Navy to rewrite the contract to cover the higher cost. Such cost overruns were frequent, though the studio was not always successful at renegotiating the contracts. *Protection Against Chemical Warfare* resulted in a $1,600 loss for Disney when the finished film exceeded both the maximum footage and cost per foot called for in the contract, and the studio also sustained a loss of almost $7,000 on a project called *Aircraft Carrier Mat Approaches and Landings.*

Content rather than cost proved to be an occasional source of complaint, and the Navy would sometimes reject a subject and return it to the studio for correction. The WEFT series of aircraft and warship identification films proved to be less successful than originally hoped and was jokingly referred to as Wrong Every F_____ Time. This contract was cancelled at the Navy's request.

2. Taxes to Beat The Axis

The most widely seen, as well as the most controversial, of all of the Disney wartime films had its genesis shortly after Pearl Harbor when John L. Sullivan of the Treasury Department contacted Walt about doing a film on the income tax. New tax laws had added to the rolls 7 million taxpayers who had never filed an income tax return before. To Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, fell the burden of educating these new taxpayers, and he felt Disney would be just the man to help. What Morgenthau

envisioned, however, was a Disney-created Mr. Average Taxpayer, and he opposed Walt's humor-oriented plan to use Donald Duck as the star. Disney argued somewhat testily that loaning Donald to the Treasury Department was like MGM loaning out Clark Gable, because Donald was the Disney Studio's biggest attraction. Walt's vision prevailed, and Donald became the star of *The New Spirit,* which was designed not so much to explain how to fill out the tax forms but to show the need for payment and how simple the process was. Because income tax payments were due March 15, 1942 there was tremendous pressure on the Disney Studio to produce *The New Spirit* in record time. The Treasury Department had not contacted the studio until December 18, but within two days story men Joe Grant and Dick Huemer, who had scripted *Dumbo,* had completed a story treatment. By a curious turn of fate, this first treatment was rejected for the tax picture but was later filmed as the Oscar-winning *Der Fuehrer's Face.*

Tax experts determined that Donald was "unmarried but maintains a home in which he supports three adopted nephews under 16 years of age for whose maintenance he has a legal and moral obligation." Donald listed his profession as actor, with an income of $2501.00, but as the head of a family he was entitled to certain exemptions and dependent credits, so his taxes came to only $13.00. Donald's cry of "taxes to beat the Axis" underscored the patriotic thrust of the film.

The humorous portion of the film concludes with Donald eagerly rushing from California to Washington, D.C. to deliver his tax payment in person. Then *The New Spirit* shifts to a final animated segment marked by less humorous, more warlike images. Several images from this conclusion are remarkably powerful and effective. A Japanese battleship with a Rising Sun painted on its side explodes, and this Rising Sun slowly sinks beneath the water to the strains of Beethoven's Fifth. A Nazi submarine is also blown up, and the film cuts to a closeup of the Nazi flag being flushed away in a vortex of dark, swirling water. The final shot of the film is a reverse zoom that reveals a watercolor wash sky of multi-colored clouds, forming the U.S. flag.

Although such short subjects normally took as long as six months to produce, by mid-January Disney was able to send George Buffington, Undersecretary of the Treasury, the following wire: "From time story was phoned from Washington to completion date and into laboratory totaled only four weeks. This is fastest time ever made on any cartoon production and the fastest service Technicolor has ever given." The Treasury Department had agreed to pay Disney $40,000 to produce the film, with an additional $40,000 allotted to buy the thousand prints necessary for saturation booking in the nation's theaters.

A January 30, 1942, memo to Walt from his brother Roy, who handled the business concerns of the studio, foreshadowed trouble over payment for the film. Walt, unaccustomed to accounting terminology, had told Buffington that he would make the film for "out-of-pocket costs." Such an agreement would not cover the indirect costs of overhead, such as supervision, light, heat, taxes, or depreciation, and Roy cautioned Walt to use the phrase "without profit" in the future.* Roy noted that individual government officials were understanding, but "it is the General Accounting Office that is cold and impersonal and hews to the exact letter of the agreement." Roy also pointed out the studio was pushing its own subjects off the screen. The Treasury Department was making *The New Spirit* available to nearly 12,000 theaters at no charge. If these theaters had already booked a Disney short, they would almost certainly cancel that booking in favor of a Donald Duck picture that they could get without cost.

The New Spirit was an instant success. Entertaining as well as informative, the film had all the quality of a prewar short despite its rushed production schedule. To coincide with the saturation booking, Walt ordered a full-scale publicity campaign, just as if *The New Spirit* were a feature film.

Within days of its release *The New Spirit* was garnering critical praise, as well as some notoriety that the Disney Studio had not anticipated, The Treasury Department had paid Disney $40,000, plus the additional $40,000 for print costs, with funds it really did not have. To cover these costs, Morgenthau had been forced to submit a request that $80,000 be added to the defense appropriations bill currently being debated in Congress.

*With overhead of 20 per cent figured in, the cost of producing the government films exceeded the proceeds from sales by almost $13,000 in 1942, but an eight-fold increase in sales the following year left a surplus of over $72,000. The studio retained this "profit," and the Annual Report for 1943 explained that "this amount has been provided as a reserve for possible losses on future government work or for ultimate refund to the government." Losses of $36,500 in 1944 and $9,500 in 1945 left approximately $26,000 in the fund at the end of the war. Since the armistice did not necessarily mean the end of government contract work, this reserve was maintained through 1947, but so few postwar government films were made that the account was wiped clean in 1947.

Lines of opposition formed, and John Taber, a Republican from New York and a veteran of nearly 20 years in the House of Representatives, drew the first blood on February 6:

> The Treasury Department and the Bureau of Internal Revenue have gone ahead and hired Walt Disney, a great artist, and I am not criticizing Mr. Disney, but I think the gentlemen in the Treasury Department ought to know better than this. They have hired him to make a moving picture that is going to cost $80,000 to persuade the people to pay their income taxes. My God! Can you think of anything that would come nearer to making people hate to pay their income tax than the knowledge that $80,000, that should go for a bomber, is to be spent for a moving picture to entertain people? . . . Perhaps there is no limit to how far some people will go in making a travesty out of some of this national defense activity.

As Congressional debate on the First Deficiency Appropriations Bill warmed up, the Republicans began searching for examples of Democratic boondoggling. An obscure fan dancer named Mayris Chaney had been appointed to a $4,600-a-year Civilian Defense post, and the Republicans claimed her sole qualifications for the job were her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt and her naming one of her dances the Eleanor Glide. In this stew of partisan politics, Disney films and fan dancing were lumped together indistinguishably as examples of entertainment that was inappropriate to the wartime situation.

The content of *The New Spirit* was never discussed. Simply the fact that it was a *movie* made it an inappropriate item for government support.

Democrat Clarence Cannon of Missouri challenged the Republicans by pointing out that Disney had donated his services free of charge, as had the distributors, and that the film normally would have cost $150,000. Cannon added that film was not only the most persuasive medium but the one which would spread the Treasury Department's message far better than press or radio. (Ironically, the film itself shows Donald receiving the government's tax message through radio.)

The House of Representatives, choosing to ignore Cannon's pro-Disney argument, promptly disapproved the appropriation for *The New Spirit,* 78 to 63.

Extensive newspaper coverage of the Congressional furor over *The New Spirit* blew the issue out of proportion, and the studio began to receive negative letters. A doctor from Muskegon Heights, Mich., wrote on behalf of people who take their children to see Donald Duck "and then find that out of our defense stamp contributions, came the pay for Mr. Disney's

masterpiece. Pretty good business, Mr. Disney—paid by us for the film and by us to see the film. . . . Our little grouplet has quite a number of members now — our slogan — 'Not a dime for Disney.' " A Chicago "Mother of Sons in the War" added that it was "high time we boycott kikes like you," and a Rhode Island woman complained that Walt had jeopardized his prestige by charging for the film. "Had you *given* it," she wrote, "your name would have been venerated, even if it is a quack, quack, quack cartoon."

Such accusations that Disney was a war profiteer were unfounded. On the contrary, Walt's share of the $80,000 payment from the Treasury Department had not even covered production costs, and the studio was forced to write off a direct loss estimated at four to six thousand dollars. In addition, Roy Disney's prediction of cancellations of other Donald Duck pictures proved accurate, and the studio lost an estimated $40,000 in bookings. The woman who had suggested that Walt donate the film did not know these figures, nor did the public realize that the Disney Studio had begun the fiscal year over a million dollars in debt.

Despite the criticism, Disney must have taken satisfaction in the critical and practical success of the film. By March 17, the Treasury Department reported that *The New Spirit* had been seen by 32,674,000 people in 11,800 theaters. A Gallup Poll reported that an astonishing 37 percent of those who had seen the film felt it had affected their willingness to pay their taxes.

Courtesy of Dick Huemer

At a Washington meeting early in 1942, Walt Disney, with pointer, shows the storyboard for The New Spirit *to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau (far left). At the right are story men Joe Grant and Dick Huemer.*

No sooner had Disney finished *The New Spirit* for the Treasury Department than he was contacted by Claude Wickard, the Secretary of Agriculture. In a nationwide radio address delivered from San Francisco, Wickard had coined the phrase "Food Will Win the War and Write the Peace," and in the spring of 1942 the Agriculture Department decided that this slogan would be a good subject for a Disney-produced film. The purpose of the film was to give encouragement to hard-fighting but underfed and undersupplied U.S. allies as well as to remind domestic audiences of the importance of farmers to the war effort. By the first week in April a contract had been signed, and Walt assigned Ben Sharpsteen to direct the film. The first storyboards that were sent for approval to Washington were rejected, and a letter to Walt passed along some specific criticisms by Nelson Poynter of the Agriculture Department: "The net effect of the film would indicate that the United States' job of feeding the world is altogether too easy. . . . Hollywood for many years has spread the misconception that the United States is rich, fat. Let us not lead with our chin by perpetuating this misconception." Poynter added, "I have a definite reservation as to the wisdom of 'And Write the Peace' from the standpoint of our foreign policy."

The title was shortened to *Food Will Win the War*, and many of Poynter's other suggestions were incorporated into the revised storyboards. A new scene was added near the beginning of the film that illustrated the sacrifice and aggressiveness of the American farmers. At the end a scene was added to show the great danger involved in delivering our foodstuffs around the world. In between came statistics displayed pictorially through often humorous images: enough fats and oils to make a fat lady who could blot out Berlin, an ear of corn that stretched from London to the Black Sea, and hams that dwarfed aircraft carriers. Disney's famous Three Little Pigs made an appearance, dressed patriotically in "Spirit of '76" style with a fife, drum, and flag, and leading a long parade of pigs.

Disney completed the film four days ahead of the contract's July 25, 1942, deadline. Within a week he had delivered another government short — *Out of the Frying Pan Into the Firing Line* — which, like the income tax picture, was an incentive film. Disney made the film for the Conservation Division of the War Production Board to illustrate how necessary it was to the war effort for housewives to save kitchen fats and greases. Minnie Mouse starred in the film as the representative American housewife. She offers some bacon drippings to Pluto but is interrupted by a radio voice telling her that kitchen fat can be converted into glycerine, and glycerine is needed to make cannon shells. "One pound of grease can make five shells," Minnie learns.

The animation effectively creates psychological connections by having objects dissolve or metamorphose into other images; the drips of grease from Minnie's skillet are transformed into falling bombs, which sink Axis ships.

"A skillet of bacon grease is a little munitions factory," the narrator tells Minnie. Pluto, now convinced that his sacrifice will help the boys at the front, spurns Minnie's offer and salutes a picture of Mickey Mouse (who is in uniform). He brings Minnie a can, and the film proceeds into a brief instructional segment showing housewives how to store the fats until enough is accumulated to turn in. Once Minnie has a pound of fat, Pluto takes it to the meat market — and trades it for some wieners!

Directed by Jack King, *Out of the Frying Pan Into the Firing Line* was one of the last government films produced by the studio with any of the well known Disney stars. Pressing budgets and time schedules

were making elaborate character animation a luxury the studio could no longer afford.

One subsequent film that did retain a familiar face was *The Spirit of '43,* in which Donald Duck again delivered a message for the Treasury Department. Both Disney and the Treasury Department had weathered the Congressional storm over *The New Spirit,* and within six months Walt was asked to do a sequel. Even before the release of *The New Spirit,* Secretary Morgenthau had suggested a series of short films, but this idea was not formalized until September 1942, when Treasury Department officials met with Kay Kamen, who represented the Disney merchandising interests, to suggest four additional trailers as well as a sequel. In order to avoid a repetition of the controversy over funding, both parties agreed to ask Congress for the money first and make the commitment afterward. The Treasury Department asked Lowell Mellett, head of the domestic branch of the Bureau of Motion Pictures, to approve $75,000 for *The Spirit of '43* and the four additional trailers. Morgenthau wanted to reuse part of *The New Spirit,* but Disney opposed this. (Walt's opposition is somewhat surprising since one of his original points in accepting *The New Spirit* project was that for little added expense the film could "later be adapted for Defense Savings Bonds purposes.") Roy Disney telegraphed his brother on September 24 to advise against any secondary use of *The New Spirit* on the grounds that the effectiveness of the new film would be lessened when the public recognized the old material.

On November 3, Roy Disney learned that Mellett had approved $20,000 to redevelop *The New Spirit* but had rejected any appropriation for the trailers. Since $20,000 was hardly enough to develop a new cartoon, Disney was forced to accede to Morgenthau's wishes, and a contract was signed for a new cartoon segment to be spliced onto the latter half of *The New Spirit*. Jack King was assigned to direct the film

In *The Spirit of '43,* Donald is torn between the temptations of a zoot-suited spendthrift and a gentle, counseling, thrifty Scotsman (who looks much like a precursor of Uncle Scrooge McDuck). These two opposing forces engage in a tug-of-war over Donald until both lose their grip and crash in opposite directions. To emphasize what each side stands for, the Scotsman crashes into a wall whose plaster falls away, revealing lines of red bricks and white mortar. A zoom-out reveals a window of stars on a blue field (indicating men in the service), and this composition creates an American flag motif.

The spendthrift crashes into a bar whose swinging door shatters into a swastika. His bow tie has become a swastika as well, and he blows swastika-shaped smoke rings. Donald approaches the spendthrift (who now sports a Hitler mustache and forelock), but instead of succumbing to his entreaties, he smacks him, then runs off to the Internal Revenue window to pay his taxes.

Though it generated less publicity, *The Spirit of '43* is a better film than *The New Spirit*. The choices between right and wrong are defined and made visibly distinct, and Donald works better with a foil. The pacing is improved and more gags are used, but this does not blunt the message.

Even though Disney had agreed from the outset to produce all government films "without profit," it was very much in his interest to get as many of these contracts as possible. The government projects kept the studio active and enabled Walt to retain employees whom he might otherwise have been forced to let go. By the summer of 1942 the Disney Studio had so many government contracts it was almost impossible to keep track of all of them.

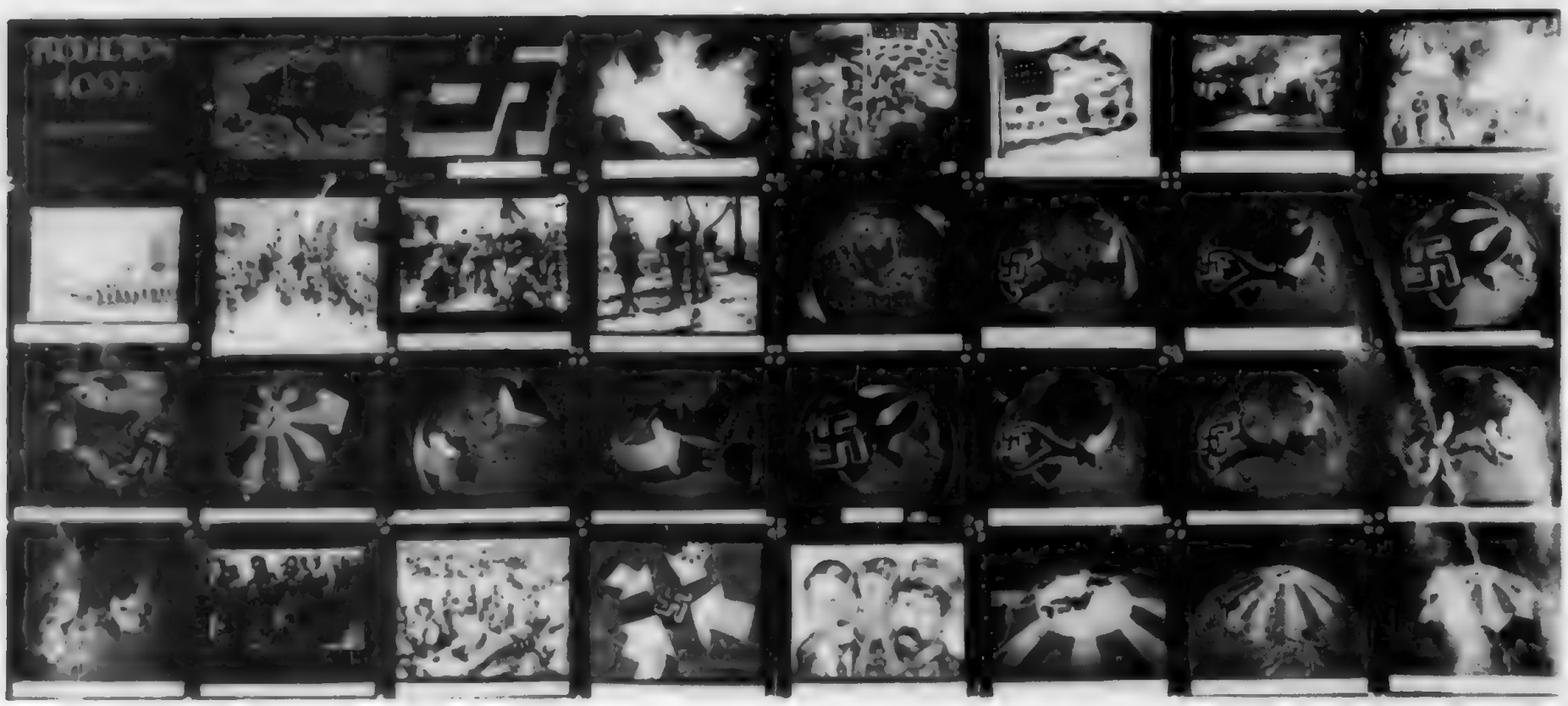
The military projects were constantly growing in number. Draft boards were invited out to the studio to examine samples of the military work, and many of Disney's key animators and staff were thus saved from the draft because of their work on these films. Their work, especially on the highly classisfied projects, was clearly more crucial to the country's needs than any job they might have been assigned if inducted. Many who enlisted or who could not be deferred found themselves assigned to the Signal Corps — where they continued to work as animators.

The approach Disney used to get a contact to make the Navy's Aerology films is typical of how he got many military contracts. As work on the first Navy films began (the WEFT series), it was only natural for Navy pilots and instructors to visit the studio. Through such contacts Walt learned of the need for a technical film on the subject of meteorology. The studio undertook research on the subject and prepared storyboards to show how the subject could be taught using animation. In April 1942, when Captain C. T. Durgin and Lieutenant T. Orchard visited the studio, they were shown these storyboards. Durgin was greatly impressed, and at his instigation several Navy meteorologists and experienced Navy personnel visited the studio to discuss the project (whose title had been changed from Meteorology to Aerology).

On May 5, 1942, Disney wrote the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, outlining the preliminary research and listing the numerous story conferences with Navy technical advisors. A stenographer had attended all meetings, and Walt pointed out that any suggestions had been incorporated into the scripts. Disney was able to say with complete confidence that no other studio was as qualified or prepared for this project. "This studio feels it is eminently suited to handle the subject AEROLOGY," Walt wrote. "Although certain climatic conditions are a regular happening, photography is not always available or capable of portrayal. A production based on various weather conditions can best be expressed, portrayed, then diagnosed by the animation medium." Walt added that he had specially trained animators called effects men who had studied weather phenomena and were skilled in the use of equipment and methods, such as the multiplane camera, washoff and silver key processes, and frosted cel techniques, that were necessary to handle such a subject, Faced with such a presentation, the Bureau of Aeronautics awarded the $500,000 Aerology contract to the Disney studio, and work quickly began on *Icing Conditions, Fog,* and *Thunderstorms,* which were the most crucial subjects. These first subjects were made under the supervision of Lieutenant Newton Lieurance. The first two films of the Aerology series were done in black and white, but the rest, at Lieurance's recommendation, were filmed in color, and the contract was rewritten to account for this added expense. Many of these films were designed to simulate a pilot's viewpoint: by screening them the pilots would learn to recognize and react to unstable weather conditions.

Working from top-secret reconnaissance reports, Disney artists created other films to show bomber crews what they might experience on strategic missions.

These were highly classified projects, supervised by men fresh from combat. One of the first of these war heroes to come to the studio was Commander J. C. (Jimmy) Thach. Fresh from combat in the Pacific, Thach was the inventor of the fighter plane technique known as the



Courtesy of Campbell Grant

In his autobiography, The Name Above the Title, *Frank Capra described the Disney Studio's role in the making of* Two Down and One to Go, *storyboards for which are shown on these two pages. Capra tells of attending a 1944 meeting at the Pentagon at which this problem was discussed: "After V-E Day, some military forces could go home, others were needed in the Pacific until Japan surrendered. Now then, which troops should be considered surplus? What would the priorities be, and what weight should be given each priority, for instance: marriage, children, length of service, battle service, wounds, hardships, decorations?" And once the decision was made, how best to communicate it to the men? Capra's answer: "Film. Communicate with film . . . Put all your information in one film. Show that same film to all servicemen on V-E Day. Let the Chiefs of Staff explain things directly to the G. I.'s — and gentlemen, you will avoid the SNAFU of the age." Capra was told he had to make the picture in 60 days, to be ready for a German surrender as early as December 1, 1944. "Jeez! Sixty days! 'It isn't possible to make a picture in sixty days!' I blurted out. 'Half of it'll be animation . . . Maybe . . . if I could write a script by tomorrow night. I know Disney'll help. Well, what the hell. Let's try it . . . . . I flew out to see Walt Disney. Yes, he could complete ten minutes of 'line' animation on a twenty-four-hour schedule, if the film was in color — 'Because, Frank, separate colors tell their own story quickly, like traffic lights. Technicolor executives threw up their hands in horror. One thousand 35mm Technicolor prints, and three thousand 16mm prints of a thirty-minute film? Delivered in thirty days after they get the cutting print . . . I called Disney. Okay on color. It's 'go' on the storyboards. Get me a bed ready in his classified area."* Two Down and One to Go *was shown to many thousands of American soldiers immediately after V-E Day on May 8, 1945.*

"Thach weave," which was responsible for downing 19 out of 20 Japanese planes in the Battle of Coral Sea. Relying on Thach's expertise, the Disney artists turned out many films on aerial warfare.

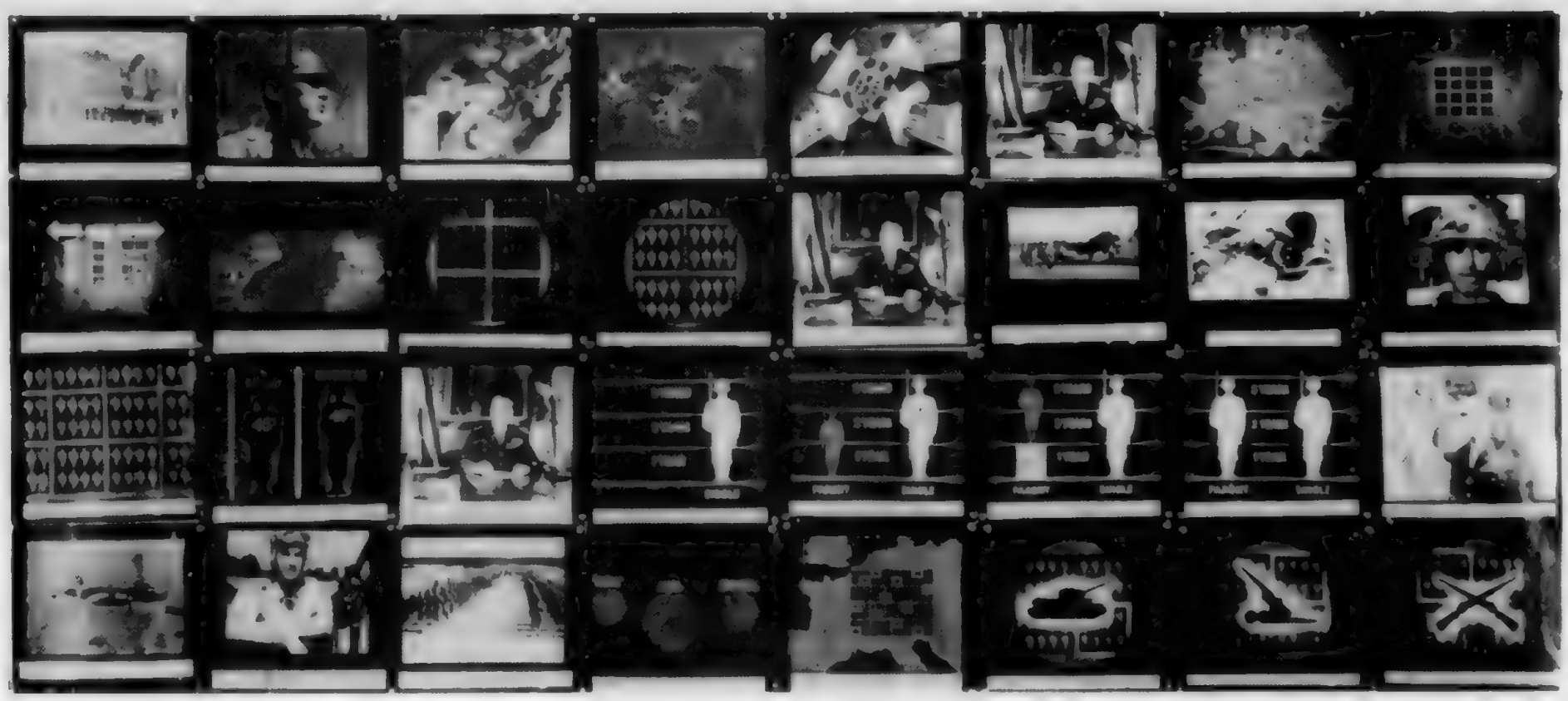
While many of the Army and Navy films dealt with aviation, one of the largest military contracts awarded to Disney did not. Raymond Farwell, a former university professor, had written a book called *Rules of the Nautical Road,* which had immediately become the bible of sea-lane navigation. The Navy assigned to Disney the job of filming the entire book, and Commander Farwell ended up moving right into Walt's office. He converted it into an apartment in which he did cooking and laundry and the efforts to dislodge the old gentleman from these quarters have become legendary at the studio. Finally, after six months, the housing shortage eased, and Farwell was able to find new lodgings.

Rules of the Nautical Road was filmed in 26 parts and ran over 27,000 feet. Because the traffic rules of the sea depended upon the red and green lights that distinguished port from starboard, much of the series had to be filmed in color, which added to its cost. No live action was used in the series, since the animation was of the simplest kind. "If a scene deals with lights on two different ships," said one studio memo, "and the teaching point in question refers to the lights, what the director does with the wakes of the ships in that scene is relatively unimportant. To spend time and effort to achieve a realistic wake in that scene is 'gilding the lily.' " The films were functional and valuable, though hardly entertaining, and bore scant relation, except in their place of origin, to the popular Disney product enjoyed by the public.

Price and deadlines ruled out any use of character animation in most training films, which relied instead on visually unappealing flat diagrams. When the time-consuming cel process could be avoided, three-dimensional models were used: tiny tin or paper airplanes and warships were photographed with a vertical crane.

The Navy Department, which controlled the structure and content of these training films, consistently vetoed studio suggestions to include some humor in the films. But if entertainment values were sacrificed, accuracy was not. Disney artists flew in the fastest bombers, ascended in balloons, and descended in submarines in order to acquire the first-hand knowledge necessary to design these films. Military educators insisted that the films end with a review session, though Disney people knew this was unnecessary for such films as those in the *Fixed Gunnery and Fighter Tactics Series,* which were screened several times. "You see, one thing the educators have overlooked," war ace Butch O'Hare told studio representatives, "is that we are trying to learn how not to die. We don't need any reviews."

As Disney landed more and more military contracts, security at the studio tightened. Employees received clearances and were given identification badges. "You will note that your picture looks very much like someone else. This is entirely beside the point," explained the 1943 studio manual for new employees. Entry to units working on classified sub-



jects was restricted, and military guards were posted around the lot.

Though most of Disney's government contracts were acquired through the studio's own initiatives, some were not. In March 1942, Frank Capra, by then a colonel in the Signal Corps, had written Walt to congratulate him on the income tax picture and had mentioned a projected series of documentaries called *Why We Fight*. Capra conceded to Walt that animation was the only method that could achieve certain effects; and explained, "I have an idea that some animated maps and other effects might be used throughout. I'd like to talk to you about it in the very near future, either when you're in Washington or when I come to the coast."

When Capra began the *Why We Fight* Series, he gathered some of the best talent in Hollywood, and the first civilian contractor he approached was Walt Disney. The documentaries in this series were shown to every American serviceman and were designed with three purposes in mind: to destroy any lingering faith in isolationism, to build up a sense of American strength and enemy inferiority, and to stress the bravery of American allies.

Disney's work for Capra differed from his other military work in two ways. Capra was not a bureaucrat, and he did not demand the precise written contracts that the studio had come to expect with most government projects. And where the Disney staff had been accustomed to shooting 100 per cent of the military films up to now, for Capra their contribution was only a small part of the total film, because the *Why We Fight* films depended on stock footage.

Most of the animation in the Capra documentaries consisted of maps with diagrams or arrows showing areas of combat. Little character animation was used, and the whole series was filmed in black and white, A map of Europe might show Germany darkened, and through animation, this black area could ebb or flow to indicate the boundaries of Nazi aggression or retreat. An outline of Germany might transpose itself into a swastika, or Japan might change into a black dragon, but the animation seldom grew more complicated than this. Campbell Grant, Riley Thompson, and Yale Gracey were Disney story men who worked on the Capra project, and Lou Debney, Ray Jacobs, Dick Taylor, Lenard Kester, Thelma Witmer, Rea Medby, Bill Reese, Andy Engman, Jack Boyd, and Jack Huber assisted in drawing the maps.

Capra set up his headquarters in the Fox Western Avenue Studio but was often at the Disney lot. The *Why We Fight* films were only part of a larger series of Army orientation films designed to boost morale, and Capra, under pressure to produce them quickly, was often impatient over how long it took to produce the animated sequences. "God damn it," he complained to Walt, "we can't take longer to show what happened in Warsaw than it actually took!" Lou Debney, who worked on the project, recalled, "If it took three days to do it with tanks and guns, Frank thought we ought to be able to turn it out that fast." Carl Nater, Disney's production coordinator for the Army and Navy films, was finally forced to write to Capra expaining that each foot of animation required an average of 17 drawings and that each drawing required 20 to 25 minutes to produce. In the first six months, Disney artists had produced over 4,500 feet of animated film for Capra.

3. South of the Border

The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) had been established on August 16, 1940, by executive order of the President, with Nelson Rockefeller as head of the agency. It was given the task of strengthening the ties among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. Two months after his own appointment, Rockefeller named John Hay (Jock) Whitney to oversee the Motion Picture Section of the CIAA. Late in 1940 Gunther Lessing, chief counsel for the Disney Studio, was appointed chairman of the short subjects committee of Whitney's Motion Picture Section, and it was undoubtedly through this channel that Rockefeller and Whitney approached Walt Disney with a proposal to make a tour of South America. Since the early days of Mickey Mouse, the Disney characters had been popular in South America, so it was not without some expectation of positive results that Disney was asked to undertake this goodwill tour. Walt insisted that it be a working holiday and chose 15 people from the studio to accompany him. Their purpose, according to a studio press release, was "to utilize properly, in the medium of animation, some of the vast wealth of South American literature, music, and customs which has never failed to fascinate them." The group left Los Angeles on August 17, 1941.

Joining Walt on this two-month trip was Norman Ferguson, a 12-year veteran of the studio and the man most responsible for the creation of Pluto. Ferguson was asked to serve as producer for all films developed as a result of the trip, and

Larry Lansburgh, a member of Ferguson's unit at the studio, went along as the assistant director for the group. For story men Walt chose William Cottrell, Jr., Ted Sears, and Webb Smith. Jack Cutting, who had been to South America once before to prepare the *Pinocchio* soundtracks for Latin America, was assigned to supervise the Spanish and Portuguese versions of *The Reluctant Dragon, Dumbo,* and *Bambi*. James Bodrero and John Miller joined the party as story-sketch artists, as did Mary Blair, whose studio nickname, one gossip columnist noted, was Marijuana Blair, "because of the ideas she dreams up." Mary's husband Lee Blair and Herb Ryman were the layout men, and Frank Thomas came as an animator. Thomas remembers Walt choosing him for the trip only as a means of keeping him from being drafted. Then, three weeks prior to the group's departure, a new law made Thomas less vulnerable to induction, and Walt told him he didn't need to go. "But I wanted to go anyway, and I did, though I didn't have an official job," Thomas recalled. Charles Wolcott, who would eventually be nominated for three Academy Awards for his musical work on the pictures developed out of this trip, went as the group's musician. Rounding out the staff members were John Rose, the business manager, and Janet Martin of the Publicity Department. Mrs. Walt Disney and Mrs. William Cottrell also traveled with the party.

Though only one member could speak Spanish and one other could make himself understood in Portuguese, El Groupo, as the entourage came to be called, did not go to South America unprepared. Prior to the trip the studio prepared voluminous research books, indexed by country, that included facts on trees, cacti, birds, animals, festivals, popular games and dances, traditions, and lore. The books also contained research on famous native singers and artists, studio contracts, and how popular cartoons were in each country.

El Groupo flew first to Rio de Janeiro, where Walt presided over the Brazilian premiere of *Fantasia*. One of the aims of the trip was to investigate the possibility of setting up a South American branch of the studio, and when the group moved on to Buenos Aires for an extended stay, a makeshift studio actually was set up at the Alvear Palace Hotel. *El Pampero,* the Nazi newspaper in Buenos Aires, noting Disney's arrival and calling attention to the Jewish name of one member of the group, editorialized against such Yankee infiltration by North American producers. A month later, the *Hollywood Reporter* noted that *El Pampero* had not persisted in its attack on the Disney visit, presumably because it could not counter Disney's considerable popularity in Argentina.

After Buenos Aires the group split up: Jim Bodrero, Frank Thomas, and Larry Lansburgh headed for the gaucho country of northern Argentina to gather material that would ultimately reach the screen as *El Gaucho Goofy*. Lee and Mary Blair, Herb Ryman, and John Miller traveled to La Paz, Bolivia, and the Lake Titicaca region, which would become the setting for one of Donald Duck's adventures. Walt, Norm Ferguson, Bill Cottrell, and Ted Sears flew to Mendoza, Argentina, the destination of little Pedro, the mail plane who flew over the Andes. The rest of El Groupo went on to Santiago, Chile.

Rather than fly home, the group favored a slower method of travel, which would allow more time to sort out story ideas and sketches. On October 4, Walt and the others boarded the Grace Lines' *Santa Clara* for a 17-day sea voyage from Valparaiso to New York City. After his return to California, Walt reported that the South American series of shorts was tentatively set at 12, "and although at present we haven't the slightest idea of making a feature length job on a South American theme, I've been in the business too long not to say 'You never can tell.' "

The first film to be completed under the auspices of the Coordinator's agency by the Disney Studio was *South of the Border With Disney,* released late in 1942. This half-hour filmed record of the studio's 1941 South American trip serves as a preface to *Saludos Amigos,* just as *Saludos* is a trial run of sorts for the later, more polished *Three Caballeros*. As such, *South of the Border With Disney* offers an introduction to the content if not the structure of both South American features; but its quality is well below what one normally associates with a Disney film. The live-action footage, which makes up nearly all of this film, is adequate but is saddled with a dull, uninspired narration. References to the war are avoided or left purposely oblique. During shots of Brazil's Independence Day parade, for example, the narrator salutes that country's military preparedness but leaves unmentioned the reasons why such preparedness was necessary.

Several brief cartoon sketches, which, though fully animated, are neither linked nor given backgrounds, offer previews of several characters — Pedro, the little mail plane; Joe Carioca; El Gaucho Goofy; and the lofty, stubborn llama from Lake Titicaca — who would soon appear in *Saludos Amigos*. Also introduced are characters from shorts tentatively titled *The Flying Gauchito, Pluto and the Armadillo* and *Caxanga*.

Dances from the various countries, such as the Brazilian *samba,* the Argentine *zamba,* and the *quaka* from Chile, are demonstrated, and several members of the studio entourage are shown engaging in a variety of pursuits (though only Walt, Norm Ferguson, Lee Blair, and Herb Ryman are ever identifed by name). Walt is seen trying the *quaka,* and Norm Ferguson does so many Pluto sketches for the children that he and Pluto *both* end up with sweaty brows.

The original plan simply to release 12 South American-oriented cartoons was changed sometime during the summer of 1942, and it was decided to package the shorts in groups of four and release them as features. This idea made sense politically, and may have originated with Rockefeller or someone in the Coordinator's office. Since each short dealt with a single country, releasing them separately would have limited their exposure and undercut the theme of hemispheric solidarity, which was the main reason for government backing.

Saludos Amigos (Hello Friends) became the title of the first South American feature, and live-action footage of El Groupo was used to link the four cartoon segments. Walt Disney found himself a cinematographer for the film, and, in a letter to David O. Selznick, he cautioned:

> When you look at this subject, please keep in mind that it was never designed for release as a package but was planned as a group of shorts. Only recently we decided to tie the subjects together for a forty-minute presentation. Therefore, I had to use a lot of 16mm. stuff which I personally shot, to effect this tieup between subjects, so my bad photography and nervous hand enters into the situation.

The film opens with the Disney staff, referred to only as "a group of musicians and artists," boarding an airplane to start their trip, and a tiny plane is seen bouncing across an animated relief map of South America as the narrator explains their itinerary.

The first cartoon segment, *Lake Titicaca,* starring Donald Duck as an irrepressible U.S. tourist, is introduced by some live-action footage of the lake and surrounding Bolivian countryside. Originally titled *Donald Duck In Bolivia*, the sequence is fast paced and well-gagged, with many puns. For example, when Donald crashes into a bakery where a placid Indian woman kneads him into a loaf of bread, the narrator tells us it is a place "where the tourist can loaf around to his heart's content." The highlight of

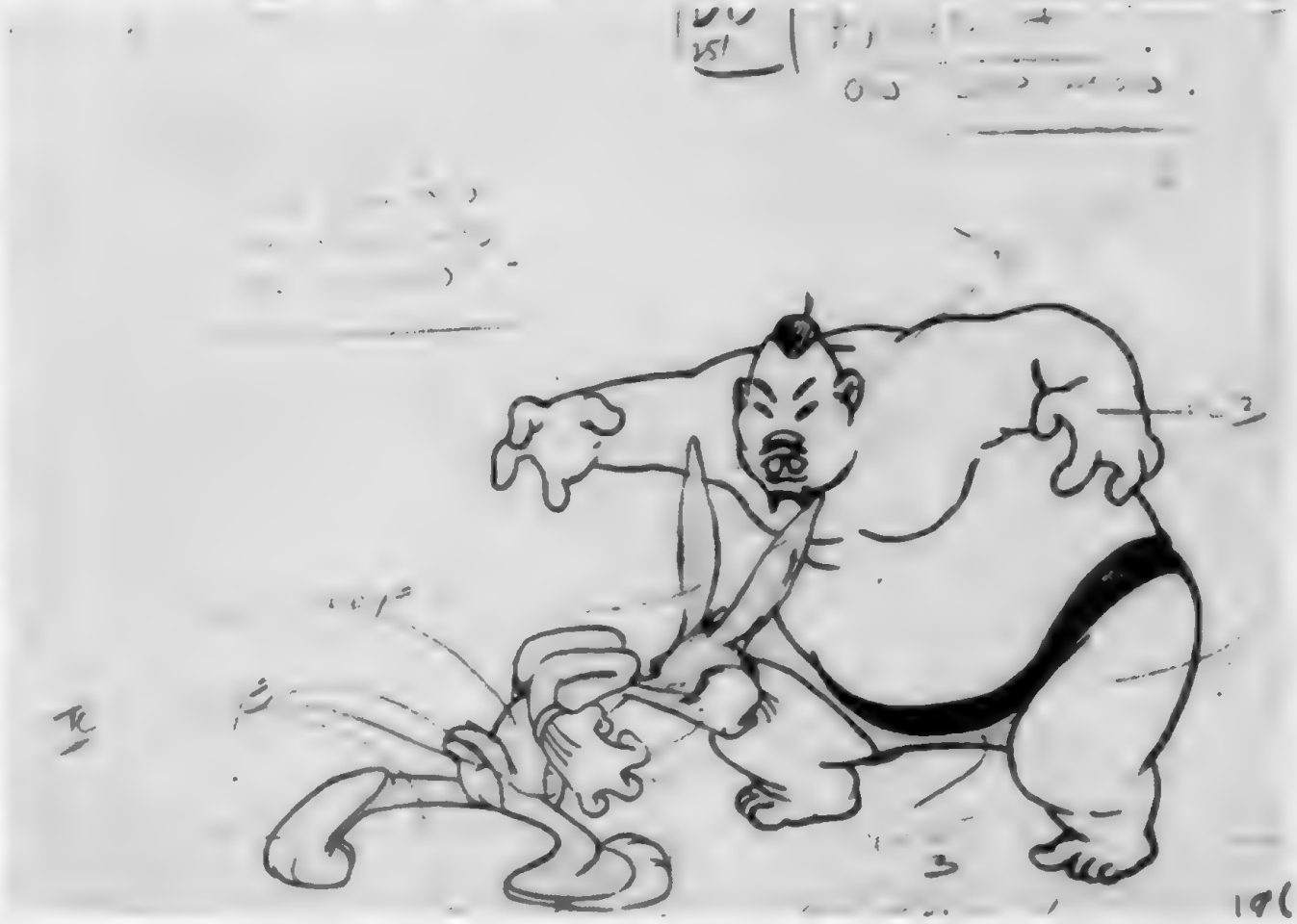
this segment is the encounter between Donald and a whimsical, stubborn llama, marvelously animated by Milt Kahl.

The second segment of *Saludos Amigos* is about a family of mail planes in Chile. An illustration of the power of positive thinking, *Pedro* is the familiar "Little Engine That Could" story, given a South American setting. When his father comes down with a cold in his cylinder head and his mother develops high oil pressure, Pedro volunteers to make the daily mail run from Santiago over the Andes to Mendoza. Pedro's route takes him dangerously close to the menacing Aconcagua, "tallest mountain in the Western hemisphere" (such factual asides by the narrator are frequent in this film), and is the occasion for a spectacular storm sequence animated by Bill Tytia. (The ability to animate weather conditions such as this storm so graphically had been one of Disney's selling points when seeking the Navy Aerology contract.)

Pedro is the only segment in *Saludos Amigos* to have a plot, but it is the weakest of the four parts, perhaps because it is the least comic and is the only one that does not star a familiar Disney character.

The Argentine artist F. Molinas Campos, famous for his paintings of the gaucho, is credited with inspiring the backgrounds for the third cartoon, *El Gaucho Goofy*. The live-action footage that precedes this animation shows Disney and his staff visiting Campos in his studio. (Similar footage had been used in *South of the Border With Disney*.) The sequence was directed by Jack Kinney, and was animated principally by Woolie Reitherman. Goofy is a Texas cowboy, who is then whisked across the Rio Grande to the Argentine pampas. The similarity of cowboys in North and South America is, in fact, the major point of this cartoon.

Goofy, the Texan, is stripped and reclothed in the costume of the gaucho, and, preserving the comic, educational tone of the cartoon, each part of his new outfit is labeled with its Spanish name. Many of the Goofy pictures directed by Kinney in the 1940s, such as *How to Fish*, *How to Be a Sailor*, and *How to Play Football*, are structured around a parodic instructional narration, and *El Gaucho Goofy* is no exception.



Courtesy of Virgil Ross; ©Warner Brothers

Although the Disney studio made far more war-related films than any other Hollywood cartoon studio, the other studios were not inactive. The Leon Schlesinger (Warner Brothers) studio made most of the "Private Snafu" cartoons (model sheet at top); as his name suggests, Sanfu was the protagonist in a series of cautionary tales, demonstrating the wrong way to do almost everything. Only about 39 percent of the wartime Warner cartoons contained any reference to the conflict, almost the same as the Disney percentage (38 percent), but the Warner cartoons were notably more aggressive and uncompromising in their attitude toward the enemy. Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips *(1944) is illustrated here by an animation drawing by Virgil Ross; the drawing is marked as a guide for the cel painters. In this film, directed by Friz Freleng, Bugs wipes out a Japanese garrison, with relish.*

Kinney makes such brilliant use of cinematic devices that the medium itself becomes an integral part of the humor: Goofy and his horse are sometimes caught by wipe lines, and nightfall is once achieved by a crashing top-to-bottom wipe to black. Synchronized sound is spoofed when Goofy's campfire serenade to his horse gets stuck; the camera pans to reveal an offscreen record player as the song's real source. This creative style of comedy reaches its peak in an ostrich chase that depends upon reverse motion and an early version of the slow-motion instant replay. When Goofy and the ostrich begin to move in slow motion, the soundtrack also slows down. Then, as the pace begins to increase, so does the speed of the soundtrack until the narrator's voice reaches high-pitched unintelligibility.

Goofy is eventually transported back to Texas, but not before he and his horse demonstrate for us such Argentine folk dances as *la chacarera*, *el pala-pala*, and *el malambo*, which the narrator defines as "a solo number in which the dancer

swings out with utter abandon often described as perpetual motion below the equator."

The parodic narration works well as a satire on travelogues, but the cumulative effect of all these dances, maps, songs, and Spanish words is clearly educational. However undirected and low key the presentation may be, we do learn something about South America from this film. The live-action footage, such as the final clip bridging *El Gaucho Goofy* and the last cartoon, *Aguarela do Brasil*, where several members of the Disney group are dancing and playing instruments, is far more than just filler, for nearly everything we see here — the musical instruments, dances, costumes, and architecture — also appears in the cartoons. Dozens of sketches and paintings that are displayed before the live-action camera are incorporated into the animated material as characters or backgrounds, all of which conveys to the viewer a sense of the *process* of the art of animation. It is as if we are being asked to compare the animator's raw material (the live action) and rough drafts (the sketches) with his final interpretation (the cartoons).

Two songs , "Brazil" (or "Aquarela do Brasil") and "Tico, Tico," though not written exclusively for the film, were incorporated into the score of the final segment. Ary Barroso had written "Brazil" in 1939, and Eddy Duchin had introduced it to the United States (where it was also a bestseller for both Xavier Cugat and Jimmy Dorsey's orchestras). *Saludos Amigos* marked the first use of "Brazil" in a motion picture, though this catchy (and durable) song was heard in four more films.

Accompanying "Brazil" is a beautifully surreal prelude to the final cartoon, animated by Josh Meador. The animated paintbrush that became a trademark of the Disney-CIAA health films is used here as a conductor's baton. Each stroke of the brush is synchronized to a musical flourish. Images flow freely, and, under Meador's command, flowers become flamingoes, palm trees turn into birds, and bananas — with a dash of black paint — are transformed into toucans.

Under the direction of Wilfred Jackson, *Aquarela do Brasil* becomes the most impressive part of *Saludos Amigos*. Part of the reason for this is the introduction of a major new Disney character: a Brazilian parrot named Joe (or Jose) Carioca who takes Donald on a tour of Rio and teaches him to do the samba. When Joe Carioca first learns who his companion is, he does a brief charade of one of Donald's famous temper tantrums as a means of conveying his joyful recognition. Though this animation by Bill Tytla lasts only a few seconds, it is one of the many small touches that make the personality of this new character and his relationship to Donald so satisfying. Joe Carioca's voice was provided by Jose Oliveira, a Brazilian musician and night club comedian who for 10 years had directed Carmen Miranda's orchestra. Carioca's debonair style plays perfectly against Donald's more down-to-earth posture, and the antics of the two, combined with delightful music and colorful animation, make *Aquarela do Brasil* an impressive ending to the film.

Saludos Amigos became the first Hollywood film to premiere in all Latin American countries before opening in the United States. The record crowds it drew in South America forced the suspension of the usual practice of showing double features in some areas, and *Collier's* reported that some overly enthusiastic audiences were "threatening to tear down the theater if they didn't repeat *Saludos Amigos*." In the United States the film was released February 6, 1943, and opened to generally good reviews.

Saludos Amigos demonstrated that petty jealousies could exist even among Good Neighbors. Disney's film dealt with only four countries—Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil — and some Latin Americans felt left out. As early as August 1942, the Coordinator's agent in Venezuela had indicated an anti-*Saludos* backlash because Disney had not visited that country. He suggested that the premieres in the other countries be toned down so that Venezuelan pride would not be hurt and asked Rockefeller for permission to leak a story that Disney was thinking about doing a Venezuelan short. Venezuela had even sent a story treatment called *The Blue Orchid* to the CIAA, and Richard Rogan, executive assistant to the director of the CIAA Motion Picture Division, campaigned for it. Disney replied to Rogan that he was favorably inclined toward a Venezuelan short but pleaded that his schedule was full. By January 1943, Rogan reported that Cuba too had joined the parade of nations wanting special coverage in a Disney film. These countries, aware of the popularity of the Disney product, could hardly be blamed for wishing to share in such exposure.

A confidential source also indicated that Uruguayans resented having their country ignored and that newspapers in Montevideo were playing up this fact, thus causing friction rather than good will. The memorandum added: "When *Saludos Amigos* was released in Uruguay the title was cut to *Saludos* , leaving off the *Amigos*. This deletion has been felt by Uruguayans who, according to our information, have wondered why the qualification of 'friends' was cut from the picture when it was shown in Uruguay."

The Pelican and the Snipe, once slated as part of the second feature package, was instead released as a short early in 1944 (a full year ahead of *The Three Caballeros*). Though the film's only connection to Uruguay is the fact that its title characters are named Monte and Video, a possible reason for moving up the release date of this short may have been a desire to appease Uruguayan jealousy.

4. Lessons for Careless Charlie

German influence in Latin America was widespread in the early 1940s, and German propaganda films played to large audiences. To counter this Axis activity the CIAA began a massive program to supply South America with motion pictures about the Allied nations. Large quantities of existing entertainment films, documentaries, and newsreels were reviewed for possible use in Latin America, and those that fit the aims of the CIAA were dubbed into Spanish and Portuguese. RCA waived sound processing royalties, and several recording companies and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) also waived royalties on films distributed by the government

Existing films did not begin to cover the wide range of subjects needed, and the government and independent film producers set to work to fill the gap. While Walt Disney was still working on the entertainment shorts being developed from material gathered on the studio's 1941 CIAA-sponsored South American trip, he agreed to produce a series of educational films as well. This initial contract called for five subjects on health and five on agriculture, and by early 1943 the first of these films was ready for release. Because these films were directed toward audiences that would include many illiterates, a soundtrack narration was decided upon rather than printed titles. Color was used, since its appeal would outweigh the cost, and the cartoon medium was favored over live action because it offered more control over the subject being visualized. Details unrelated to the specific lesson of the film could be eliminated, leaving only the most important points to be learned. The films were released in 16mm to facilitate widespread distribution.

The first agricultural film to be com-

pleted, *Corn and Corn Products*, was retitled *The Grain That Built a Hemisphere* prior to release. This title change, plus the narrator's opening words: "Corn is the symbol of a spirit that links the Americas in a common bond of union and solidarity," placed the film solidly within the Good Neighbor concept of hermispheric unity. What followed was a well-made film that opens with a historical sequence illustrating the relationship of corn to the Aztec and Mayan cultures. The second section of the film is more scientific, dealing with the subjects of fertilization and inbreeding to produce hybrids. The final sequence examines corn by-products from a decidedly military viewpoint: "Alcohol for power fuels and higher explosives, tires, fabric for parachutes better than silk, plastics tougher than steel." *The Grain That Built a Hemisphere* is pleasantly informational, mixing the historical and instructional elements with a good sense of pace. The quality of the animation is higher than most of the films in this series, due to the use of footage borrowed from *The New Spirit, The Spirit of '43, Bambi,* and a 1938 *Silly Symphony, Farmyard Symphony*.

The first health film to be completed was *The Winged Scourge,* directed by Bill Roberts, who had also directed the *Grain* film. *The Winged Scourge* opens on a wanted poster of "public enemy number one," the anopheles mosquito. After a series of closeups illustrating how the insect transmits malaria germs, the narrator asks, "Are there six or seven people in the audience who will help us combat this evil?" A reverse zoom makes the previous shot appear as a movie theater screen across which are seen the shadows of several volunteers. The camera tilts to reveal the Seven Dwarfs.

The Winged Scourge makes its instructional point by showing the Dwarfs taking several precautions against malaria: Doc and Sneezy cut weeds, Happy sprays oil, and Bashful dusts with Paris green. Sleepy drains the standing pools of water, and Dopey sprays in the house. Once the house is patched and screened, the Dwarfs fall asleep, safe from disease.

Though the film was aimed at South America, the British government was so impressed with *The Winged Scourge* that it ordered several dozen prints shipped to India during the monsoon season when malaria and mosquitos were a problem.

The Winged Scourge was the last CIAA film to use well-known Disney characters. Since the film required them to perform specific and unique action, no stock animation from *Snow White* could be used, and the Dwarf sequence had to be drawn from scratch. Such a practice was too costly and time-consuming and the pictures that followed used much simpler layouts and characters. For example, in *Water, Friend or Enemy,* released in the spring of 1943, backgrounds and character movement were kept to a minimum, and the visual style tended more toward sliding cels, washoffs, and camera techniques such as pop-ins and dissolves, rather than full animation.

Disney was interested in improving literacy as well as agricultural and health habits, and in March 1943, he sent Bill Cottrell and John Cutting, two veterans of the 1941 South American trip, on a survey of Central American schools. They toured Mexico, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Costa Rica and made an extensive report:

> The Central American survey trip was made for the literacy program, but we have come back from the trip strongly impressed by the great need there is for mass education in matters of personal health and sanitation. Efforts should be made to tie the Coordinator's literacy program and its health and sanitation program together.

Two months later, the CIAA organized a Seminar On Visual Education and proposed that it be held at the Disney Studio. Representatives from several Central and South American countries attended, and Nelson Rockefeller, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, delivered the opening address on May 25, 1943. Disney, always enthusiastic about the contribution that film might make to education, actively participated in the seminar and set aside a wing of the studio to handle the conference. Technical displays were set up to acquaint seminar members with the animation medium, and Disney artists were available to instantly translate all suggestions into visual form. Cottrell and Cutting shared the observations of their recent survey trip with the participants, who concurred that sickness and subsequent cures or prevention were a major motivation to learn to read and write and that the literacy and health campaigns should be joined. The seminar members screened films from the health and agriculture series and offered their criticisms.

A discussion developed over what form the cartoon characters in these films should take. Father Luis Tapia of Bolivia offered a specific alternative to animal figures like Donald Duck:

> The pictures with Donald Duck are very amusing, but for educational purposes they may be too comic. All the excitement and continuous running about Donald Duck can hardly be understood by our Indians. This, of course, can be changed. I think it is necessary to omit some of the comedy. We should prefer a generalized type of adult. Make your hero the laborer of all countries, the man who looks for better pay, the man who does not read, does not write, who is poorly dressed and poorly fed, I believe we can find a general type to represent all those aspects of the poor man's life. The poor child of the humble home is almost the same in all countries.

Tapia's comments are particularly significant, because nearly all of the films subsequently made for the CIAA by Disney are built around a character who incorporates all of his suggestions. In a few of the films he is called Ramon or Jose; in most, when he is named, he is called Careless Charlie (who becomes Careful Charlie at the end of the picture, once the lesson has been learned).

Defense Against Invasion (1943), directed by Jack King, combined live action with animation to show the need for vaccination. After this film, the fourth made by Disney for the CIAA, the basic design of the health films changed. In the 10 films that followed, all parts of the Health for the Americas series, a fairly standard pattern or formula developed: the film would open with the introduction of a typical inhabitant or family of Central and South America. (The characters have brown skins; the setting is always a rural village rather than a city or town.) This person would quickly demonstrate improper habits of personal hygiene, or an ignorance of principles of sanitation or nutrition. This lack of knowledge soon results in a crisis: sickness; resulting in loss of work, or even death. At this point, by "divine" intervention, the narrator offers the victim an objective view and explanation of the circumstances which led to his illness.

In *Insects As Carriers of Disease* (1944) the narrator shrinks Careless Charlie to the size of an insect. From this new perspective, the fly, mosquito, and louse, who looked so tiny and harmless before, now appear monstrous. Charlie watches how each insect transports germs to his own house and food. As the insects attack Charlie, the animator rescues him by restoring him to full size. Armed with new intelligence, Careless Charlie proceeds to bury his outside filth, drain the swamp, boil his clothes, and wash and bathe himself. The narrator tells him, "Well, you've certainly changed your habits; we'll have to call you Careful Charlie." Nearly all of the films teach the same corrective remedies: wash hands and dishes, build and use a latrine, boil water before drinking it, and eat a properly balanced diet.

A device used in nearly all of the films is the intrusion of the animator's hand and

paintbrush (always in animated form) into the frame.

The Human Body (1944), for instance, opens on an animator's drawing table. The artist's shadow appears, and his hand enters the frame and paints several figures. He pushes the group into a single composite "Everyman" figure and paints a house and farm animals. The narrator asks the film character to consider which of his possessions is most valuable and in a hypothetical situation, deprives him of these possessions one by one. For example, the animator's hand reaches into the frame with a match and burns the house to the ground. The conclusion reached is that the man's own body is his most valuable possession, and the remainder of the film is devoted to an examination of the human body. The animated hand of the artist plucks out the character's skeleton, and the body collapses. Later, when the narrator mentions the need for fresh air, the hand reappears and paints a window in the farmer's house. Whether an uneducated audience, many of whom had never seen a movie before, found this intruding artist's hand incomprehensible is moot. Such a distancing effect was probably no more illogical than animation itself to such an audience.

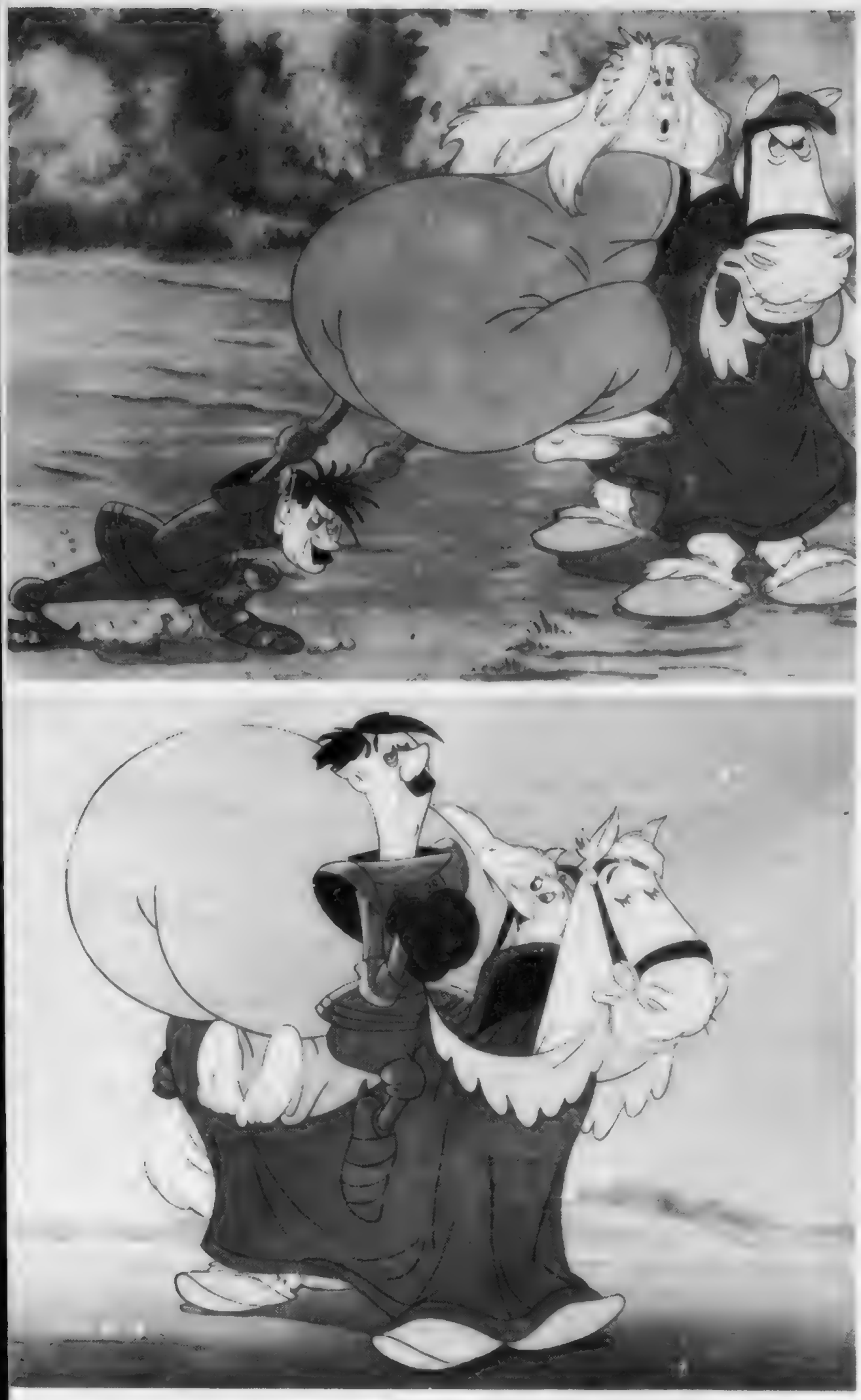
The final three films of the series — *Infant Care, Environmental Sanitation,* and *Planning for Good Eating,* all produced in 1945 — offer a more advanced form of education. The rudimentary methods of the earlier films, such as how to build a latrine or cap a well, are replaced by more sophisticated instruction. The content of these final films suggests that the Disney staff and the CIAA were indulging in some wishful thinking in their effort to portray the best of all possible postwar worlds. *Environmental Sanitation,* for example, shows stagnant pools of water dissolving to paved streets and open air markets, which give way to modern, glassed-in stores.

Since the office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was a war information agency, it is rather surprising that the films Disney produced for it are so free of overt propagandistic references. However, the absence of direct propaganda in these films should not be taken as proof that such ideas were not ever contemplated. Robert Spencer Carr, a writer for the Disney Studio and a participant in the 1943 Seminar on Visual Education (where his title was listed as "Specialist in Audio-Visual Techniques of the Educational Films Division of the Walt Disney studio"), wrote a report for the Coordinator's Office that reveals the extent to which expedient calculation and manipulation were considered at the earliest planning sessions of these CIAA films.

Since Latin America was overwhelmingly Catholic, Carr suggested that the films take advantage of this:

> Animation, being a magical medium, has profound potentialities for evoking sentiment and awe. "Ave Maria" in FANTASIA was only a beginning. We should make full use of this quality in many of the "big" subjects suggested, creating a deeply religious feeling, and associating this with political ideals. We can have beautiful and reverent scenes in which The Christ of the Andes is seen in the background, or a huge Cross fills the sky; or, more subtly, when the voice, the music, and the *artist's style of painting* suggests a religious atmosphere ... as when we see the Spirit of Pan-America or of Victory, standing behind our weapons.

One section of the report was titled "The Creation of New Symbols," and Carr felt the Disney Studio might make its greatest contribution in this area. He suggested that the old Character Model Department, which had once developed with cartoon personalities, he revived as



From Education for Death; © *Walt Disney Productions*

the "Ideological Symbol Department." For example," he wrote, "right now we need to create 'Pan-Americana,' a noble female figure, bearing a torch and a cross, subtly suggesting both the Virgin Mary and the Goddess of Liberty.'"

Carr's report, written during the first month of the war, when U.S. prestige was low and the outcome of the war uncertain, offered suggestions (few of which were ever accepted) far removed in concept and tone from the films that were actually produced. Since most of the Disney-CIAA films were made in the later stages of the war, this ideological shift suggests that as American military strength grew and an Allied victory appeared inevitable, the need for direct propaganda diminished.

Though the health and agriculture films remained free of war references, the Disney Studio did make, in 1942 and 1943, several overtly propagandistic cartoons that were partly financed by the CIAA. The original contract between the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Disney Studio, which Rockefeller and Walt had signed, called not only for a series of Latin American-oriented entertainment shorts but for four films that were put in special category. These films—*Der Fuehrer's Face, Reason and Emotion, Chicken Little,* and *Education For Death*— were as pointedly anti-Nazi as anything the studio ever did. For the South American 16mm, non-theatrical rights, the CIAA paid Disney $14,000 for each film, though Disney retained complete control over content and owned the theatrical rights for the United States.

Der Fuehrer's Face, or *Donald Duck in Nutzi Land* as it was originally called, was the first of these propaganda shorts to go into production, and Jack Kinney, who would direct a string of successful Goofy pictures during the war, was assigned as director. The script closely followed the story treatment that Joe Grant and Dick Huemer had written for the income tax picture. Though their idea had been rejected for *The New Spirit,* it was too good to stay on the shelf for long. Donald, asleep in a room dominated by Nazi decor (swastika wallpaper, swastika numerals on the alarm clock, even the trees and hedges outside are trimmed to the shape of swastikas), is rudely awakened by the jab of a bayonet and the order "Get mit der clothes!" After a hurried breakfast of ersatz food (he saws a loaf of wooden bread, sprays the room with Aroma of Bacon and Eggs, and dunks a single, hoarded coffee bean in water to make coffee), Donald heads for a munitions factory where he works on the assembly line screwing down bomb casings. The script called for this scene to echo the assembly line scene in *Modern Times,* and Donald, like Chaplin, ultimately goes berserk from the strain of trying to keep up with the unceasing parade of shells. "I can't stand it; I'm going nuts!" screams Donald, as a closeup of his face rotates and explodes into a surreal nightmare world. In this remarkable scene, animated by Les Clark, the roles are reversed: images of Donald move down the conveyor belt and are pounded by a shell casing. Another explosion occurs, and dozens of Donalds fall, settling finally in a sleeping form that awakens with a start. Seeing on the wall the shadow of an outstretched hand giving the Nazi salute, Donald shouts "Heil Hit—" then remembers himself. He turns and sees that the shadow is actually caused by a miniature Statue of Liberty. He rushes to embrace it and coos, "Am I glad to be a citizen of the United States of America." The film ends here, but the closing iris

opens again long enough to show a close-up of Hitler receiving an overripe tomato in the face.

The film is solidly animated and has plenty of gags (though we never lose contact with the moral lesson), but the real highlight is the theme song, "Der Fuehrer's Face," written by Oliver Wallace.

The song was published long before the film was ready for release, and Spike Jones, a trombonist in the John Scott Trotter band and leader of his own group of jazz musicians called the City Slickers, decided to record it, because he needed another song to fill out his recording of "I Wanna Go Back To West Virginia." He recorded two versions of "Der Fuehrer's Face": one used a trombone to mock each mention of Hitler; the other used a rubber "razzer" to simulate the effect of a Bronx cheer. Jones was convinced that the latter version was better and traveled to New York to plead his case. RCA Victor executives agreed, and when this "razzer" version was released it sold over a million and a half records and established the popularity of Spike Jones and his band.

Realizing that the whole country was singing what Oscar Hammerstein II called "the great psychological song of the war," Disney executives changed the title from *Donald Duck in Nutzi Land* to *Der Fuehrer's Face*. The film was completed late in 1942 and the following March won the Academy Award for best animated short subject (Disney's tenth Oscar in this category in 11 years). By this time the second of these "psychological productions," as the Disney Publicity Department called them, *Education For Death*, had been released, and work continued on the final two films of this series, *Chicken Little* and *Reason and Emotion*.

Gregor Ziemer had published *Education For Death: The Making of a Nazi* in 1941. In the 1930s Ziemer had been President of the American Colony School in Berlin, which was sponsored by the American ambassador and the American Consul General. He had personally observed the methods of Nazi education and had published his account shortly after fleeing Germany. The book proved to be extremely popular, and *Reader's Digest* published a condensed version in its February 1943 issue.

Disney's cartoon adaptation followed the education of one German boy, Hans, from birth to manhood. In elementary school he is taught the New Order's version of the Sleeping Beauty story: the Wicked Witch is Democracy, the Prince (in armor) is Hitler, and the Sleeping Beauty whom he awakens is Germania. The sequence is the most memorable part of the film, and it offered animators Bill Tytla and Ward Kimball an opportunity to indulge in some marvelous satire. Germania's characterization as an obese, overly amorous Brunhilde became a takeoff on Hermann Goering. Kimball remembers being forced to tone down some of the scenes, especially a slightly suggestive scene where Hitler tries to lift Germania onto his horse.

Despite such humor, the overall tone of the film is decidedly grim. In another schoolroom sequence, Hans's Nazi instructor draws a parable between a wolf and a rabbit to illustrate the lesson that the world belongs to the strong. When Hans blurts out sympathy for the rabbit, he is punished and reeducated.

After a montage of bookburnings, smashed church windows, and Bibles dissolving to *Mein Kampf*, the film concludes with a shot of rows and rows of goose-stepping Nazis. Though the composition and movement within the frame never change, the figures dissolve from children to youths to soldiers. A closeup of the latter image reveals Nazi blinders and manacles on the men. The marchers finally dissolve into rows of graves. Taken as a whole, *Education For Death* is far more somber and demands more serious reflection than *Der Fuehrer's Face*, which had resolved the Nazi regimentation as a mere bad dream. A month after Disney's animated short was completed, RKO released a feature-length version of Ziemer's book, called *Hitler's Children*, starring Tim Holt and Bonita Granville.

Reason and Emotion also probed the Nazi psyche by satirizing the theme of regimentation. The picture takes place inside an adult's head, where Reason and Emotion are personified: Reason is properly dressed and wears glasses; Emotion (who was modeled on Ward Kimball) is swarthy and wears a cave man's suit. When the latter tries to stop and flirt with a pretty girl, Reason counsels, "Now, now, we must have proper respect for womanhood." The adult, in whose head the two figures dwell, fails to listen to Reason and ends up being slapped by the offended girl.

A montage of wartime newspaper headlines shifts the film to a German setting, where Reason and Emotion are seen inside the head of a dull-looking Nazi soldier. Emotion, wearing a Wagnerian helmet and armed with a spear, forces Reason to submit to the Nazi ideologies offered by a Hitler caricature animated by Bill Tytla. A closeup of Nazi boots marching over the rubble of a wartorn world suggests an ending similar to *Education For Death*, but the film switches back to its American setting for the conclusion. Now in the head of an Allied pilot, Reason and Emotion quickly work out a compatible and co-operative truce, and the film fades out on planes streaking across a red and yellow sky as the narrator exclaims, "We will set out to do the job we have to do, and we'll do it right."

Reason and Emotion is by far the least successful of the psychological production, because its parts fail to cohere. The first half of the film makes Reason such a prim and stuffy force that Emotion easily becomes the more preferable role model. Only when Emotion is characterized as a Nazi does he become distasteful.

Chicken Little, released late in 1943, was the final propaganda film called for by the CIAA contract. It simply reworked the old fairy tale about rumor and blind faith into a Nazi setting. Foxey Loxey uses Nazi psychology to make a puppet of the stupid and impressionable Chicken Little. A whispering campaign discredits the intelligent Cocky Locky, and the frantic barnyard community chooses as their new leader Chicken Little, who tells them to flee and seek shelter in a nearby cave where they are trapped and eaten by the fox. A narrator cries out, "Wait a minute. That's not right; that's not how it ends in my book." But Foxey Loxey smugly responds "Dat's how it ends in *my* book." The unhappy ending of *Chicken Little* matches the grim conclusion of *Education For Death*, and virtually no other films in the entire Disney *oeuvre* can match these two shorts for sobriety and pessimism.

5. 'Victory Through Air Power'

Alexander Procofieff de Seversky was born in Russia in 1894 and began military school at the age of 10. At 20, he graduated from the Imperial Russian Naval Academy with the rank of lieutenant, and the following year, in the Battle of Riga, he was shot down and lost his right leg. Through the intervention of Czar Nicholas II, Seversky returned to combat, where he served with distinction and received in 1917 the Order of St. George, Russia's highest military award.

Seversky came to the United States in 1918 as a member of the Russian Naval Aviation Mission. He was subsequently hired by the U.S. government as a test pilot and aeronautical engineer and by 1921 was acting as an advisor to General Billy Mitchell. In 1927 Seversky became an American citizen and the following year was commissioned a major in the U.S. Air Corps Reserve.

During the 1930s Major Seversky solidified his growing reputation in aviation by developing a high-altitude pursuit plane, designing and building the fastest amphibian plane in the world, and becoming the first to use the trailing-edge split flaps subsequently used on all modern aircraft. He set several air speed records, winning the Bendix Trophy three successive years and the Harmon Trophy as the outstanding airman of 1939. By virtue of these accomplishments Seversky became recognized as one of the world's leading experts on air power in modern warfare.

In the early months of the war, however, American military thinking was still battleship-oriented. American airplanes for the most part could not match the German product, and many of Roosevelt's military advisors ridiculed the idea of upgrading the aviation program. As a result, the United States had given aircraft production only a third place priority in manufacturing, and Seversky, critical of this mentality, developed a reputation as a troublemaker and crackpot. To enlist public support, Seversky condensed his theories into a book that was published in the spring of 1942. *Victory Through Air Power* went on to become one of the bestsellers of the year.

Walt Disney had for some time been interested in making an aviation picture, and his staff had already begun research on the subject when Walt discovered *Victory Through Air Power*. On May 4, 1942, Walt sent the following telegram to one of his staff members:

> Am anxious contact Major Alexander de Seversky by telephone and mail. Will you endeavor get this information to me earliest possible moment but definitely eliminate my name from all inquiries made.

There can be little doubt that Disney's chief motivation here was patriotism. The subject matter was not really of a commercial nature, but, more significantly, Walt, who always preached timelessness in his pictures, was with *Victory Through Air Power* viollating one of his firmest principles. After the war, the film would be virtually useless.

Seversky, no stranger to Disney's public appeal, was receptive to the offer, and by the summer of 1942 Disney owned the screen rights to *Victory Through Air Power*. Seversky was signed as a technical advisor, but before long his role had expanded considerably. Because of his talent as a designer, he developed a close working relationship with the artists, and many of his rough sketches served as a basis for the animation.

The Audience Research Institute, directed by George Gallup, played a key role in the construction of the film version of *Victory Through Air Power*. Disney paid Gallup $5,000 to measure audience reaction and publicity penetration. In July the *Reader's Digest* published a condensed version of Seversky's best-seller, and by August a Gallup survey reported that 20 million people had heard of Seversky and 5 million had read his book or the *Reader's Digest* adaption. A poll taken early in September indicated a high interest in the film, but the Gallup staff cautioned that it was unusually difficult to judge the audience potential of *Victory Through Air Power* for two reasons. First, it was a departure from normal films, especially Disney's, and most persons polled found it hard to believe that the film would not be humorous. Secondly, experience in opinion research had taught the pollsters that people tended to exaggerate "their intention of doing what they feel they ought to do. And there are a good many 'ought to' factors in this property — patriotism, education, and literary reputation."

The Audience Research Institute's Index of Publicity Penetration showed *Victory Through Air Power* to have a "want-to-see" score of 78 per cent. The report added that the average want-to-see score for all "A" pictures was 72 per cent (for *Bambi*, it was 61 per cent). The poll found that the Disney-Seversky film aroused much stronger interest among men and boys than among women and girls, a finding that held constant for most aviation films.

In a follow-up report, A.R.I. revealed that 51 percent of the moviegoers polled said they would be interested in seeing Major de Seversky on the screen. (By comparison, 68 percent wanted to see Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, 61 per cent Madame Curie, and 54 percent Stalin.) To the question "Would you prefer that the motion picture theater that you attend show more war pictures or not so many?" moviegoers responded:

Not so many	47%
More	26%
Alright (sic) now	25%
Don't know or care	2%

These statistics indicated that only nine months after Pearl Harbor, the war content of Hollywood films had reached the saturation point. Based on these figures, Gallup told Disney that the sooner *Victory Through Air Power* could be released, the better. Such news was not well received at the studio, where work on the film was going much slower than anticipated.

As news of Disney's intention to film *Victory Through Air Power* circulated, Walt was flooded with offers and unsolicited advice. One lieutenant colonel wired: "Am introducting a number of radical new ideas in modern warfare which will positively bring about tremendous shortcuts to victory. . . . Will almost certainly outdate your Seversky film. . . . For screen credit and financial compensation would be willing to cooperate with you in producing Seversky film to include my modern warfare plans." In order to investigate such offers and to corroborate Seversky's theories, Walt sought the advice of other aviation experts from the U. S. Air Corps and the RAF. "Our studio became a sort of Mecca for visiting airmen," Walt noted. Not all of these pilgrims visiting Mecca were in accord, however, and by late 1942 and early 1943 the Disney Studio had become an ideological battleground for aviators.

One of Seversky's bitterest critics at the studio was Commander Jimmy Thach, war hero and technical advisor on the *Fixed Gunnery and Fighter Tactics* series. He and Seversky agreed on the dominant role of aviation but differed on the details of application. Seversky placed all of his faith in a long-range, multi-gun bomber; Thach and many other Navy pilots still favored short flights by carrier-based planes. Thach's own combat record in the Pacific and the success of the "Thach weave" lent credence to the carrier-based idea, but Seversky, whose theory depended upon a plane that had not yet been built, argued that bold, innovative thinking was needed and that continued reliance on philosophies such as Thach's would only prolong the war.

A lengthy story conference held on July 29 established the rough form of the picture, and it was decided that two-thirds of the film would be animation and one-third live action, in which Seversky himself would appear. Walt had originally hoped to release *Victory Through Air Power* before the end of the year, but this schedule was soon pushed back. Jack Kinney, Jim Algar, and Gerry Geronimi were assigned as animation sequence directors, and H.C. Potter, fresh from directing *Hellzapoppin*, was signed to do the live-action sequences with Seversky.

Victory Through Air Power opens with a brief credit sequence in which Seversky's name is billed above the title. Following this is a printed statement that concludes: "One of the men who foresaw the present mortal conflict, who tried desperately to awaken and prepare us for the issue, but who was ignored and ridiculed, was General Billy Mitchell." Mitchell, who was court-martialed in 1926 for his public criticism of military leaders, died in 1936 and was posthumously restored to the rank of major general in 1942. A montage of headlines recalling two de-

cades of Mitchell's foresight plus the dedication of the picture "to the memory of Billy Mitchell — pioneer and prophet of air power, and to the gallant airmen of America" are clearly attempts to link Seversky to Mitchell. Seversky, frustrated by his self-image as a Cassandra figure, knew that such an association would have a positive effect on his credibility, since the public was beginning to see that Mitchell, his former military associate and superior, had been right all along.

The first major sequence of the film, "The History of Aviation," directed by Jack Kinney, is by far the lightest and most humorous part. A highlight of the sequence — which has a decidedly military flavor — is an air duel between Pierre, a Frenchman, and Fritz, a German. These two warriors of World War I trade insults freely, and their relatively harmless exchange of bricks and pistol shots soon becomes one of machine-gun fire and bombs. A number of historical parallels between World War I and World War II are drawn — always with emphasis on the rapid advancement of aviation — and the sequence ends with the Wright Brothers' flight reenacted on the wing of a B-19.

For the benefit of viewers who were not acquainted with Seversky, a brief biographical sketch follows the history of aviation. This was sound planning, for the persuasive argument made in the picture depends upon our willingness to accept Seversky as an expert. Photos, a list of inventions patented by the major, and awards are shown, ending with a shot of the Harmon Trophy.

The Harmon Trophy, one of aviation's most coveted and prestigious awards, and an inscribed portrait of Billy Mitchell, with its connotations of prophetic truth, play an understated though calculated role in the fabric of this film. Shots of Seversky are invariably composed in order to include one or both of these objects in the frame. Seversky's first appearance on the screen is introduced by a pan from a closeup of the Harmon Trophy and ends with a cut to the picture of the general.

The script originally called for Seversky to have a small supporting cast, as reporters who were to question Seversky about his theories. However, when the film was cut to its final 65-minute running time, Seversy was the only person left in the film except for two unidentified coworkers seen very briefly in the introductory scene. Having Seversky speak his lines directly to the camera may have lacked the subtlety of the earlier plan, but the resulting gain in immediacy and urgency was probably more in keeping with the tone of the film.

Once the introduction to Seversky is made, the film switches to the format it will sustain until its conclusion: brief animated versions of past events or future strategies whose success or failure depend on the use of or lack of air power, intercut with live shots of Seversky declaiming his theories. Much of the animated footage is in the form of maps and diagrams and does not differ substantially from Disney's work on the *Why We Fight* series, except that here the drawings are in color and are of a higher quality, with more details. No familiar Disney characters are used in the film. Camera angles and colors are calculated on the basis of their psychological effect. Virtually all of *Victory Through Air Power* is keyed to a red-black color scheme.

The main body of *Victory Through Air Power* may be divided into three indistinct yet definable parts. The first of these is dominated by events whose outcome was affected by the presence or absence of air power: Dunkirk, the fall of Norway and Crete, the Battle of Britain, the sinking of the H. M. S. *Repulse*, and the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Gallup survey had asked moviegoers which scenes from a prepared list they most wanted to see, and the Battle of Midway (89 percent), the future bombing of Japan and destruction of Tokyo (87 percent), and the escape from Dunkirk (81 percent) rated the highest. The latter is treated rather curiously in the film in that no mention is made of any ships! Small ships are seen, but the visual emphasis and narration stress only that the RAF provided the mastery of the skies that allowed the rescue from Dunkirk to occur. The bombing of Tokyo was saved for the final triumphant scene of the film — the reward America would reap should it have the courage and wisdom to follow Seversky's advice. The leading vote-getter in the poll did not appear in the film. Disney may have decided that John Ford's documentary *The Battle of Midway*, released in 1942, had satisfied this audience interest.

The second part of the film concentrates on the lines of supply carrying war material to the combat zones. The logic of Seversky's arguments for air power was based on the relationship of these supply lines to the time schedule of the war, and, again, maps and diagrams play a crucial role. In the Pacific a straight line traces the peacetime route from San Francisco to Melbourne. Then, rays of a Rising Sun emanating from Japan distend the line until the wartime route is nearly double the peacetime distance. For the European front Disney artists pictured Germany as the hub of a giant wheel whose spokes represented the lines of supply. The film stresses and restresses Seversky's comparison of the short, interior Axis supply routes vs. the long (and unprotected) exterior routes of the Allies. This imbalance indicated to Seversky that time was on the side of the enemy and that the Allies must look for a solution that would shorten the war.

Once the problems of time and distance are defined, the third part of the film begins with a review of America's military options. One by one the China theory, Siberian-based and carrier-based bomber theories, and the island-to-island theory are presented, but Seversky

From Victory Through Air Power; *©Walt Disney Productions*

dismisses them all as too slow or unfeasible because of the difficulty of maintaining supply lines. Superimposed years from 1943 all the way to 1948 range across the screen, implying a potentially lengthy war. "What's the solution?" Seversky cries. "Long-range air power! Double the range and halve the struggle." This concept — the longer the range, the shorter the war — is the main thesis of the film.

Once Seversky's case is stated, the film moves steadily from an intellectual to an emotional pitch with an ever-increasing pace. Several blueprints are shown, and a brief fight between conventional fighter planes (which could fire in only one direction) and a prototype multi-gun bomber ends with a victory for the latter. A scene in which a German dam is destroyed, resulting in flooding and power failure, is offered as a hypothetical strategy. But by the time the film was released, Allied bombers had actually destroyed some dams in the Rhineland, so this sequence, filmed eight months earlier, demonstrated a Seversky prophecy that had already come true. Many reviewers noted this fact, and Seversky used the example to silence critics who accused him of talking only improbabilities. In his final appearance Seversky argues for a strong offensive punch. "Strike at the heart of the beast," he implores. Seen in the background one final time are the Harmon Trophy and the Mitchell portrait.

The last sequence of the film — all animated — has no narration but a very dramatic, stirring musical score, for which Edward H. Plumb, Paul J. Smith, and Oliver Wallace received an Oscar nomination. Huge bombers load up and take off into the rainy Alaskan night on their mission to bomb Tokyo. A series of explosions with one-frame bursts and a jarring cacophonous soundtrack introduce the concluding scene of the eagle and the octopus, animated by Bill Tytla. The American eagle "strikes at the heart" of the Japanese octopus, whose tentacles slowly release their grasp on the Pacific islands. Tytla, recalled animator Frank Thomas, "was able to get more power in animation than anyone else. I've studied his drawings and studied his films, and I can't see what it is that he did — just this 'Pow,' this strength that no one else has ever been able to get." As the eagle triumphs, the lightning-scarred night turns to day, and the camera pulls back for a global view of the defeated octopus, which dissolves into the burnt ruins of Japan. The eagle lands on a flagpole, where it is bronzed by a lightning stroke, and, as we hear the strains of "America the Beautiful," the camera retreats again to disclose a U.S. flag. Joining these icons of national symbol, flag, and patriotic song as the final image of the film are the words: VICTORY THROUGH AIR POWER.

Victory Through Air Power surely is one of the highest achievements of word-visualization; the animation unquestionably makes it easier to understand (and thus accept) Seversky's theories. Animated factories pulsing with activity spring up to fill our national borders when America is referred to as the "arsenal of democracy," and goods that are slowed by "the bottleneck of shipping" are literally jammed into a narrow-mouthed bottle in New York harbor. When Seversky speaks of Nazi air power bridging the Maginot Line, we see an actual bridge of planes.

The live-action scenes of Seversky were all filmed at night. Because the soundproofing at the studio was inadequate to keep out the noise of aircraft taking off and landing at the busy Lockheed plant nearby, shooting began at 10 p.m. and ran until dawn.

The form as well as the content of the picture was carefully worked out. In one instance Seversky stands before a sliding wall chart which he pushes aside to reveal a second chart. This second chart is actually a rear-projection screen, and while Seversky remains in the foreground, the backdrop begins to animate.

Though criticism of Seversky's theories had abated somewhat as America's awareness of the need for air power grew, neither Seversky nor the film were free from controversy. When the film was released on July 17, 1943, the critical response ran the gamut from Lee Mortimer of the *New York Mirror*, who called it "Disney's greatest film," to Ivor Montagu, whose *Daily Worker* review began: "I have just seen the wickedest film in the world." Seversky's book and the film came at a time when many Americans were advocating a second front to help the Russians, and any strategy — such as Seversky's — that did not support this idea was denounced as anti-Russian. The direct propaganda of the film reminded some critics of Nazi methods, and others, noting that the plane upon which Seversky based his plan did not yet exist, compared his long range multi-gun bomber to Buck Rogers science fiction.

Barbara Deming, who evaluated *Victory Through Air Power* for the Library of Congress, concluded that the film was "chiefly concerned to sell us something, not to tell us something." This was more a comment on the nature of propaganda than a negative criticism, but the fact that the Disney-Seversky collaboration was unabashedly a propaganda film is just what bothered some critics, such as James Agee, who wrote in *The Nation*:

> I only hope Major de Seversky and Walt Disney know what they are talking about, for I suspect an awful lot of people who see *Victory Through Air Power* are going to think they do. Certainly I am not equipped to argue with them. I have the feeling I was sold something under pretty high pressure, which I don't enjoy, and I am staggered by the ease with which such self-confidence, on matters of such importance, can be blared all over a nation, without cross-questioning.

Agee's criticism that the film was one-sided is certainly valid, for Seversky chose to gloss over certain consequences of his theories. "I noticed, uneasily," wrote Agee, "that there were no suffering and dying enemy civilians under those proud promises of bombs; no civilians at all, in fact."

Disney, though not unmindful of the critics, was far more interested in the public response, and steps were taken to insure a broad audience awareness. Even before the film was released, the Disney Studio, alarmed when hardcover sales of Seversky's book began to fall off, had pressured Simon and Schuster into publishing a one-dollar paperback edition.

Though RKO Radio Pictures normally distributed Disney features, it was decided that United Artists could do a better job of placing the film more quickly in more markets. United Artists' pressbook for the film encouraged local exhibitors to sponsor "Miss Victory Through Air Power" contests for the prettiest war workers and school essay competitions on the theme "Will Victory Through Air Power be achieved in 1943?" Such efforts met with only limited success, and *Victory Through Air Power* grossed only $799,000, against its $788,000 cost. Given the unique nature of this picture, though, its success would be measured in terms of influence rather than box office receipts.

As Barbara Deming noted, *Victory Through Air Power* "demonstrates a great kinship with the advertising art," so it was hardly surprising that one of Disney and Seversky's most ardent supporters was the man called by many the father of modern advertising, Albert Lasker, philanthropist and retired chief of the Lord and Thomas advertising agency. When the film was released, Lasker, by now converted to the cause by his wife Mary, who had tirelessly promoted the book to her husband and friends, used his power to insure that *Victory Through Air Power* would be seen by influential people. Lasker contributed to the film's advertising campaign and threw a *Victory* dinner at the Waldorf for 1,700 guests (including Disney and Seversky). Lasker's biographer wrote:

> He was like a man possessed. He arranged conferences with politicians and military folk, set up interviews with editors and organized a system whereby radio commentators and columnists saw the film in small expertly chosen groups; he put all his friends in Hollywood to work, outlined what he thought would be the best publicity approach in movie houses, and went after the exhibitors.

Lasker tried several times to arrange a meeting between Seversky and Roosevelt or to have the film screened at the White House, but these attempts failed, perhaps because FDR's chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy, did not number himself among those converted to the Seversky line of reasoning.

Lasker's British contacts had succeeded in getting a print to Winston Churchill, who was reportedly quite impressed with it. In August 1943, the first Quebec Conference, attended by Roosevelt, Churchill, Canadian Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, and Chinese Foreign Minister T.V. Soong, was held in order to solidify plans for the D-Day invasion of France. Some debate was held on the matter of air superiority over the English Channel, and Churchill asked Roosevelt if he had ever seen *Victory Through Air Power*. When FDR replied that he hadn't, a print was rushed to Quebec by fighter plane. Roosevelt and Churchill screened it privately and then again the following day. The President was greatly excited by Disney's film and ordered it screened for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Though neither Lasker nor Seversky had any direct hand in this, the film may have influenced the air strategy used on June 6, 1944. It was for such reasons, of course, that Disney had gambled and made the film.

6. Mythical Rogues Of the Air

It would be misleading to measure the activity of a studio only by the films it releases, for a great deal of time and energy (not to mention money) is often spent on projects that are never finished. At the Disney Studio, *Victory Through Air Power* was not the only feature-length adaptation of an aviation book that was worked on during 1942-43. An unsuccessful attempt was made to launch an animated feature about the mythical rogues of the air called gremlins. On July 1, 1942, just as the studio was beginning work on *Victory Through Air Power*, Walt received from Sidney Bernstein of the British Information Services an unpublished story called *Gremlin Lore*, written by Flight Lieutenant Roald Dahl of the Royal Air Force. Dahl, who has since become a famous novelist and screenwriter, was at the time serving in the RAF and was attached to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., as an air attache. Walt wired Dahl of his interest in the story, and the studio acquired the rights to *Gremlin Lore*.

A gremlin, explained the London *Observer*, "is an imp of bad luck to whom disasters are attributed in the roaring kingdom of the war-time sky." According to Dahl, stories of gremlins had first circulated amoung RAF pilots in the mess halls of India in the early 1920s. Some sources said these creatures were named after a popular brand of beer called Fremlin's; others traced the origin of the name to the obsolete Old English word *greme*, meaning to vex. During World War II the pilots of the Royal Air Force fostered stories of these vexatious pixies, and by the fall of 1942 the gremlin legend had emigrated to America. *Time* and *Newsweek* both ran gremlin stories in September that included pictures and detailed descriptions.

Word reached England that Disney himself was coming over to hear the gremlin stories firsthand, and the London *Observer* commented:

> It will seem strange indeed to the future historians who, unravelling the tale of our troubled times, discover that in the critical year 1942, a distinguished American travelled five thousand miles in order to make a film about elves; elves which, admittedly, no one has ever seen.

Disney did not make the trip, but his correspondence indicated that, contrary to the *Observer's* claim, a great many people had seen gremlins and had firm ideas on what they looked like. Moreover, his research staff discovered that Dahl did not have sole claim to the gremlin legend.

The first to mention the creatures in print had been British author Charles Graves, who had included gremlin stories in his book *The Thin Blue Line* (published in April 1941) and was gathering more stories for a sequel. Disney researchers turned up another gremlin book by R. Sugden-Tilley, and at the same time a friend of Dahl, Flight Lieutenant Douglas Bisgood, RAF, notified Walt that he had first claim to the gremlin family names. Disney was able to mollify some of these parties by explaining that all gremlin revenue from non-film items such as books or character merchandise would be donated to the RAF Benevolent Fund, but some claims were not easily settled. Graves held out for financial compensation, saying he was doing so only for the benefit of three RAF pilots, but pressure from British Air Ministry lawyers finally convinced him to drop his claim.

Cosmopolitan ran a gremlin article (written and illustrated by the Disney Studio) in its December issue, and after its publication Dahl was deluged with offers to turn the story into a book. Walt agreed that this was a good idea, and Random

House published *The Gremlins* as a children's book in 1943.

As gremlins became incorporated into the American language and consciousness, the Disney legal staff began to realize that the studio no longer had control over what had originally been regarded as an exclusive property. Roy Disney, whose job it was to concern himself with such matters, worried that other studios would flood the market with gremlin short subjects before the Disney feature could be released. Warner's, MGM, Universal, and Columbia all began gremlin pictures and registered titles that conflicted with Disney's earlier claim. However, for what Roy Disney called "technical reasons," the Title Registration Committee ruled against the Disney Studio.

By spring 1943, Disney's gremlin project had run up costs of $50,000, and Roy decided to personally contact the other studios to discourage competition. At Universal, Walter Lantz dropped his plans and withdrew his titles when he learned of Disney's plans for a feature. Fred Quimby, who produced cartoons for MGM, did likewise and pledged his full cooperation. Dave Fleischer, now at Columbia since the Fleischer Studio had been taken over by Paramount the year before, promised to cooperate but told Roy that he did not have the final say. At Warner Brothers, Leon Schlesinger agreed to drop plans for any future gremlin pictures but told Roy that two films were too far along to cancel. He did agree to change the titles on these two, leaving out any mention of the word gremlin. The first of these Warner cartoons was *Falling Hare*, a Bugs Bunny short directed by Bob Clampett. (In one early scene Bugs is observed reading *Victory Through Hare Power*.) The second film, also by Clampett, depicted Russian gremlins sabotaging Hitler's plane when Der Fuehrer himself decides to lead a bombing raid on Moscow. Clampett originally wanted to call the short *The Gremlin From the Kremlin*, but he changed it to *A Russian Rhapsody* on orders from Schlesinger.

Despite Dave Fleischer's cooperation, someone at Columbia persisted in planning a gremlin picture, and Roy was forced to appeal personally to studio president Harry Cohn:

> Harry, you know Walt and me well enough to realize that we wouldn't give two hoots about competition, short-subject to short-subject. But I am very worried when we start to make a feature that takes us at least a year to produce and costs us at least $600,000 to $800,000 — I'm worried at the thought of having a property of this size undermined . . . so that is the reason I'm bothering you with this — to earnestly and seriously request that you persuade your cartoon department to drop the "Gremlin" idea.

Disney-designed insignia, from Life *for May 26, 1941*

B.B. Kahane replied for Cohn and assured Roy that Columbia was not contemplating any gremlin work.

Roy Disney was taking care of the other studios, but Walt and his artists were having trouble designing the gremlin picture. For a while, Disney considered making *The Gremlins* a combination of live action and animation, but by March the plans had reverted to the 100 per cent cartoon format.

By July, a year after the project had begun, little progress had been made, and Walt told Dahl that the studio had scrapped plans to make *The Gremlins* as a feature and now wanted to do it as a short. He also expressed some concern over Clause 12 of the contract that he and Dahl had signed the previous October. This clause provided that Disney would keep Dahl informed of the development of the gremlin film "to the end that the said air attache [Dahl] may furnish such advice and suggestions as may enable the British Air Ministry to approve the final version of said motion picture." Walt's apprehension is understandable, since the wording of the clause implied that

final control over content rested not with the Disney Studio but with the British Air Ministry.

The last attempt to make *The Gremlins* may have been a lengthy story conference held on August 20, 1943, but nothing developed from this, and the picture was abandoned. In October Dahl wrote to Disney for a status report, and in December Walt finally replied:

> Definitely, the Gremlins will not be made as a gesture because of the feeling on the Distributors' part that the public has become tired of so many war films. We have given considerable thought to the possibility of making the *Gremlins* into a short and I have personally endeavored to generate some interest among the various crews but haven't met with any degree of success. However, if we ever hit upon an angle that seems right for production, we'll get in touch with you.

The letter closed the file on *The Gremlins*, and the picture was never made. Dahl's presence at the studio might have made a difference, but military duty kept him in Washington and hindered his role as an active advisor. Given the way the studio operated, it seems unlikely that Walt's explanation to Dahl — that he could not interest any crews in the project — was the real reason for the film's collapse. More likely, it was a combination of several reasons: the frustration of trying to visualize a gremlin; the audience surveys which, as early as September 1942, had indicated the public's disenchantment with war themes; the lack of clarity on the rights to the property; and concern over Clause 12.

The Gremlins was by no means the only wartime project that failed to reach the screen, though it was surely the costliest. The shifting priorities of the military training films, the experimental, still tentative nature of educational films, and the vagary of government funding all contributed to a climate of unfinished projects at the Disney Studio during the 1940s.

Most films were abandoned while in early stages of development, though *Basic English* was nearly completed before the decision was made not to release it. This film was designed for an educated foreigner who had no knowledge of English. It was based on a concept, invented by C. K. Ogden of Cambridge University, that reduced the language to a minimum vocabulary of some 800 words. Dr. Ivor Richards of Harvard, author of *Basic English and Its Uses*, was Ogden's American collaborator and acted as advisor to the Disney film.

A rough cut of *Basic English* was screened at the CIAA Seminar on Visual Education held at the studio May-June 1943. Since many of the Central and South American participants could not speak English, this was a perfect test audience. Most agreed that the film tried to cover too much ground and left one dazed rather than educated. The studio had already decided to scrap the film, but the criticism by this group helped to reinforce that decision, "It was devoid of imagination and showmanship," Jack Cutting concluded. "It was cold; even an algebraic equation would be more attractive on the screen."

Many films for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, such as *Arsenal of Democracy*, *Defense of the Hemisphere*, and *U.S. Airlines in Latin America* were authorized, then cancelled without explanation. Some films — *The Soy Bean*, *Trees and Tree Products*, *The House Fly – Public Enemy #1*, *Control of the Hookworm*, and *The Ever Normal Granary* (based on Henry Wallace's agricultural policies) — were dropped for more vital topics; others, such as *The Futile Neutral*, were cancelled when world events rendered their subject matter obsolete. Two anti-Hitler films — *The Square World* and *3043 A.D.* — were abandoned when it was decided that four of the so-called "psychological productions" were enough. After running up costs of over $11,000, work on two other films — *Men, Apes, and Moron* and *How to Be a Superman* — ended when it was discovered that the theories on which these films were based were in disfavor with the Catholic church.

Several projects that did not involve film at all played a much more significant role in the Disney Studio's wartime history than these unfinished films. The most far-reaching of these activities began in 1939 when Burt Stanley, USNR, asked Walt to design a unit insignia for the "Fighting Seven" Naval Air Squadron. Disney artists quickly supplied a design that subsequently adorned the outfit's planes, flight jackets, and letterheads. The popularity of the Disney insignia really began the following March when a design showing a belligerent mosquito astride a torpedo was created for the new Navy torpedo boats or "Mosquito Fleet." Soon every branch of the service was requesting special insignia, and Disney found it necessary to assign a five-man staff to handle the project. Hank Porter and Roy Williams (who later gained fame as TV's Big Mooseketeer on the *Mickey Mouse Club*) were responsible for much of the work.

Many, though certainly not all, of the designs employed familiar Disney characters. By far the most popular was Donald Duck, who appeared on about 20 percent of all insignia. Donald was not only Disney's most popular character on the screen, but his feisty, combative nature made him a well-suited representative for wartime military units. Following Donald in popularity was Pluto, who was used for 10 percent of all designs, and third was Mickey Mouse, who graced about 4 percent of the total. Many Disney characters found themselves appropriately used: Flower, the skunk from *Bambi* , adorned the crest of a Chemical Corps unit, and the Owl joined a night-fighting unit for the duration. Pinocchio's conscience, Jiminy Cricket, represented a chaplin's unit.

Many of World War II's most famous outfits, such as the Flying Tigers, the Eagle Squadron, and the China Air Service, displayed Disney insignia. By the end of the war the studio had created approximately 1,100 insignia. Each design cost an estimated $25, and Disney donated every one free of charge. (The tradition continues: about 300 designs have been created since 1946. Many units in the Vietnam War, such as Special Forces, First Cavalry Division Airmobile, and the Second Vietnamese Army Division, wore Disney-designed crests.)

On the home front, incentive posters picturing Disney characters encouraged Americans to do such things as buy war bonds or donate blood; in the combat zones these same characters reminded the soldiers of such matters as security and camouflage.

Not surprisingly, the same government agencies that had ordered incentive films from the studio also sought Walt's help for many non-film projects. For example, Disney artists created a lend-lease emblem that identified the foodstuffs that the United States shipped all over the world. When the Treasury Department began a "Bonds for Babies" campaign, the studio designed a certificate ringed with 22 of the most popular Disney characters, to be presented to each new young bondholder.

Seemingly no request was too difficult or too small to be overlooked. When England's Food Minister Lord Woolston wrote to Disney asking for advice on how to increase Britian's consumption of carrots, Walt wired back the same day: "Have immediately created Carrot Family. Drawings already being wired over to you. Disney." These characters — Dr. Carrot, Carroty George, and Clara Carrot — gave Woolston the help he needed to start a food propaganda campaign.

Character merchandise licensing remained fairly stable during the war, and approximately 50 Disney children's books were published between 1941 and 1945. One of these, *The Victory March; or The Mystery of the Treasure Chest*, featured Donald Duck and the Big Bad Wolf (playing a Nazi heavy) in a promotion to buy saving stamps and bonds. (Donald is trying to protect his war stamps from the wolf and is chased to the top of the Washington Monument, where he is rescued by Dumbo.) The book was prepared at the suggestion of the Treasury Department, and 10-cent savings stamps and albums to save them in were included in all copies.

One of the most interesting uses of a Disney character during World War II was the Mickey Mouse gas mask, made by the Sun Rubber Company of Barberton, Ohio. This was not a toy, but a real gas mask. The intention, says a company spokesman, "was an attempt to lessen the fear of a gas attack for children by taking the conventional, gruesome-looking gas mask and turning it into something fun." Samples were completed and delivered to President Roosevelt for his grandchildren, but the rubber shortage and lack of any real threat of gas attacks kept the mask from ever being mass produced.

7. 'The Three Caballeros'

Like *Saludos Amigos, The Three Caballeros* began as a package of shorts. During its first year of development this second Good Neighbor feature carried the working title *Surprise Package,* but by the summer of 1943 a permanent title had to be registered, and, since *Surprise Package* carried no connotation of South America, a change was deemed necessary. Walt favored *Let's Go Latin* and wrote CIAA chief Nelson Rockefeller to ask if there would be any objection to the use of the word "Latin." Rockefeller wired back the following day that this new title was fine. However, by the end of the summer, this title too had been scrapped in favor of *The Three Caballeros.* Donald Duck and Joe Carioca, who had worked well together in *Saludos Amigos*, were joined by a new character, Panchito, a Mexican charro rooster developed by story man Ernie Terrazas and animated principally by Ward Kimball. Ray Gilbert had commemorated this new trio in a song called "The Three Caballeros," and it was eventually decided that this would be the best title for the film as well.

In order to develop new material for the film, Walt and a dozen members of the studio, including several veterans of the 1941 trip, spent two weeks in Mexico in December 1942. In the fall of 1943 a studio group made a second trip to Mexico for still more research. Although *Saludos Amigos* served as a blueprint for *The Three Caballeros,* Walt had no desire simply to duplicate the first film. It was decided that a unique combination of live action and animation would distinguish *The Three Caballeros* from previous Disney films.

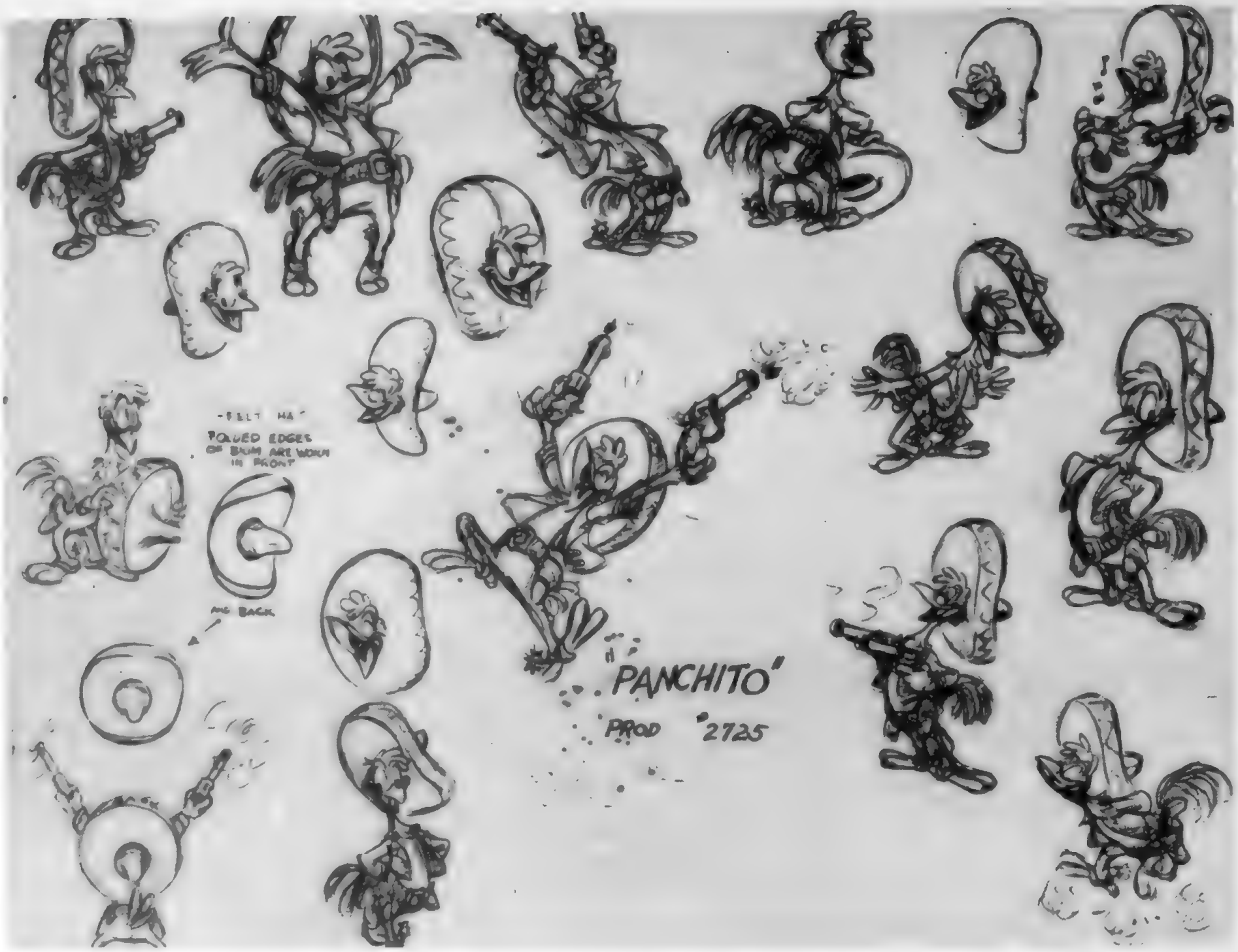
Live action was not really new to Disney. *The Reluctant Dragon,* released in 1941, had been his first feature to employ live action, and *Victory Through Air Power* had contained numerous live-action scenes with Major Seversky. *Saludos Amigos* had used Disney's own footage to tie together its parts. Yet none of these films combined animation and live action *within the same frame,* and this is what Walt dreamed of doing in *The Three Caballeros.* Even this technique was not new, for Disney had combined a real little girl with cartoon characters in the early, silent *Alice* comedies in the mid-1920s. But the *Alice* films were black and white and had thus been relatively easy to produce. (The Disney Studio had also produced brief live-action-and-animation segments for two films made by major studios in 1934: Fox's *Servants' Entrance,* starring Janet Gaynor, and MGM's *Hollywood Party,* which featured a sequence with Mickey Mouse and Jimmy Durante.)

To combine live action and animation in color was a much more difficult operation, but Walt insisted on developing and perfecting this technique. Disney had the creative genius to envision how the results would look, but the burden of making Walt's dreams come true fell to such men as process effects supervisor Ub Iwerks and art supervisor Ken Anderson. Anderson recalled that Walt "was always attempting to get something new that would really *boggle* the mind. And so he was impatient of limitations or technical restrictions of any kind. He wanted freedom to do anything which improved the illusion of reality."

Disney first determined through George Gallup's Audience Research surveys that there was some interest in seeing Donald Duck appear with real people. He then signed three Latin American actresses to co-star in the film: Dora Luz and Carmen Molina of Mexico, and Brazil's Aurora Miranda (whose sister Carmen had already found the Good Neighbor policy to be a stairway to stardom). As always, the inimitable Clarence "Ducky" Nash provided Donald Duck's voice, and Jose Oliveira again spoke for Joe Carioca. Over 100 actors were tested for Panchito's voice before Joaquin Garay, a San Francisco nightclub entertainer, was selected. Garay was born in Mexico but had lived in the United States most of his life. Music for the film was provided by Manuel Esperon, Ary Barroso, and Agustin Lara, aided by Disney's own composers Ray Gilbert and Charles Wolcott. A studio publicity release explained that "Lara, Esperon, and Barroso occupy a position with the people of the Southern republics comparable to Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and Vincent Youmans in this country."

The tone of *The Three Caballeros* is shaped by the roles Donald and his friends assume. Donald is the North American (and, as such, is a representative of us all). He is a stranger to Latin American customs but becomes a traveler and a willing pupil eager to learn all he can about these exotic lands south of the border. Joe Carioca of Brazil and Panchito of Mexico offer the contrast. They are the Latin Americans who will act as Donald's guides and teachers. In addition to travel, a theme that becomes consistently stronger through the final two-thirds of the film is Donald's relationship to the three actresses and other women who appear. He is both romantic and sexually aggressive, which prompted *Newsweek* to call him a "web-footed wolf." Joe and Panchito are themselves not immune to the charms of these Latin sirens, but they never become as flirtatious and obsessed as their friend, and they frequently serve as restraints to Donald's libido.

The structure of *The Three Caballeros* is carefully worked out in a tripartite fashion. Starring three cartoon characters and three real actresses, the film is made up of three parts that build progressively. In the first part, *Aves Raras,* Donald is the only caballero present, and, since the section is all animated, no actresses are seen at all. The second part is called *Baia,* and Donald is joined by the second caballero, Joe Carioca. It is in this part that live action is first combined with the animation, and the viewer is introduced to the first actress, Aurora Miranda. The final section, *La Pinata,* which is made up of many smaller sequences, introduces Panchito, the third caballero, and the two Mexican actresses, Dora Luz and Carmen Molina. The progression is one that carries us from simplicity to complexity. Not only do the characters increase numerically, but the pace increases and the cinematic technique and story both be-



Model sheet for **The Three Caballeros**; © *Walt Disney Productions*

come more complex as the film advances.

The film opens on a shot of a festively wrapped gift that bears the tag, "Felicitations to Donald Duck on his birthday, Friday the thirteenth, from his friends in Latin America." Donald opens his present (which proves to be the "surprise package" of the working title) and discovers a movie projector and a film about *Aves Raras (Strange Birds).* The first part of this film-within-a-film recounts the adventures of Pablo, the Cold Blooded Penguin, whose only desire is to escape from the icy Antarctic to the sunny Galapagos Islands. Narrated by Sterling Holloway, this sequence is a story of wish fulfillment with a twist. Once Pablo attains his goal, he immediately begins to yearn for his former home at the South Pole. Pablo's story is told with a simple poignancy that affords many comparisons to the shorts of Charlie Chaplin.

After Pablo, the narrator (no longer Holloway) introduces us to several other strange birds including the aracuan, whose staccato song and dizzy pace make even Donald seem staid by comparison. The aracuan bird serves as an agent of disorder, and with his appearance our concept of reality is challenged on several levels. Cartoons by their very nature operate at one remove from reality, and we acknowledge this as a convention of the medium. But in a film where real and animated characters interact, the distinction is blurred and our acceptance is challenged. In this first section of *The Three Caballeros* we must accept two worlds: the world of Disney's film which we as an audience watch, and the world of Donald's film (the film-within-the-film) which we both watch and see Donald watching. The aracuan is bound to neither of these worlds. He escapes from Donald's film by walking out of the picture and up the projected beam of light to shake hands with Donald, and he escapes from Disney's film by running out of the frame to some unknown periphery beyond (we see him pass by the optical soundtrack and the sprocket holes). "You'll find him most everywhere," says the narrator. This aracuan, who defies the conventions of both cinema and reality, reminds us that we are watching a film but also reminds us of the world beyond film.

The final sequence of *Aves Raras* is the story of Little Gauchito and his flying donkey, narrated by "an old gaucho from Uruguay." The gauchito and his miraculous steed win a local race, only to be disqualified from claiming the thousand-peso prize when the crowd discovers that the burrito has wings.

Once *Aves Raras* is concluded, Donald's attention is drawn to another of his birthday presents, which is smoking and pulsing with a samba beat. He opens it to find a book on Brazil, from whose pages emerges cigar-smoking, samba-dancing Joe Carioca. No sooner do Donald and Joe exchange greetings than the crazy aracuan appears again to confuse our sense of reality. (It is here that he runs past the sprocket holes of the film.) Though the aracuan's appearances are always brief, they are significant, for this character objectifies the sense of disorientation and lack of order that run through the film.

Having already introduced Donald to Rio in *Saludos Amigos,* Joe Carioca here asks repeatedly, "Have you ever been to Baia?" (Bahia, or Baia as it is called in the film, is a coastal state in eastern Brazil.) Joe

points out Baia on a map of Brazil, and the dot to which he points expands to fill the frame and introduce us to animated views of Baia. Accompanied by the song "Baia," this sequence is a showcase for special effects animators Joshua Meador, George Rowley, and John McManus, who create marvelous images of orchids, birds, rippling water, and other sights of Baia.

The layout of the animated scenes of *The Three Caballeros* defies the laws of reality. If we presume the original setting of the film to be Donald's living room, it must be an assumption based on faith alone, for the absence of any background detail belies even a sense of scale. The book on Brazil from which Joe Carioca springs becomes the proscenium for virtually the entire sequence. Joe controls the transitions between scenes by turning the pages. The static illustrations begin to move and draw the viewer as well as the gay caballeros into animated worlds far removed from the stable if ill-defined confines of Donald's home. Once Joe magically shrinks Donald (who, until this point, has been drawn in a scale much larger than the parrot, who emerged from a small book), the two run into the pages of the book and hop on a train bound for Baia. The train journey, animated by Les Clark, is constantly periled by the crazy aracuan, who keeps switching the tracks in a maze of confusion.

In Baia, Donald is lovestruck at the sight of Aurora Miranda, and when she gives him a kiss (filmed with her back to the camera, so that she shields Donald's body from view and eliminates the problem of matching the lip contact between a human and a celluloid duck) the screen explodes in a surreal fantasy of colors, musical instruments, and dancers, which is beautifully animated by Les Clark.

The combination of live action with animation was difficult and required meticulous planning. The cartoon directors and the live-action crew would meet to determine whether the animation should be drawn first or the live action photographed first. Ray Rennahan, cinematographer for *Victory Through Air Power*, was signed to shoot the live-action sequences. In most of the scenes a rear projection screen was used with specially designed quartz lenses delivering the necessary amount of light. The animation was projected 50 feet to a 14-by-20-foot translucent screen, and the live-action camera was set up 25 feet away on the opposite side of the screen. The live actors had to maintain enough distance from the screen so that the lights on them would not wash out the animated images from the rear projector. The system was not without its limitations. In addition to the difficulty in coordinating the live action to match the cartoon, the rear projector would create a "hot spot" when it was beamed straight into the camera. Panning shots were impossible, and it was very difficult to achieve the effect of having the cartoon figure and live actor walk on the same turf.

Sometimes the live action would be shot first. At the end of her song, "Os Quindins De Yaya," Aurora Miranda's dancing becomes so infectious that the lampposts and buildings start to sway and samba with her. Here the live action was filmed first, and the animation added later by the lab. Ken Anderson, who supervised many of the scenes, also explained, "There were some scenes where we had to do it both ways: after we shot a rear projection screen scene, later we would shoot another scene with the animation — they'd match by travelling matte in the process lab and combine the scene on the optical printer. It was during that time that we developed our optical printer."

As Aurora Miranda dances out of sight amid the swaying buildings, we cut to the master shot of the book on Brazil, which closes to end the sequence. Joe Carioca scrambles out of the book and pulls out Donald, who is squashed flat. The two caballeros inflate themselves back to normal size, though Donald has great difficulty in doing so.

The final section of the film — *La Pinata* — introduces the third caballero: Panchito, a Mexican charro rooster. (A *charro* is a cowboy.) Donald and Joe open the last of Donald's presents, which sets off a scene in which a stylized soundtrack dominates the frame (somewhat reminiscent of *Fantasia*) as the duck and parrot dance in the foreground. Donald eventually gets caught in the soundtrack, and the vibrations transform him into a Rorschach pattern. He finally inflates like a pinata, and when Joe bursts this balloon shape with his cigar, out comes Panchito with his guns blazing. The three then sing the title song, "The Three Caballeros," in fast-paced and remarkably boisterous animation.

The two scenes which immediately follow the charro's introduction are as much educational as they are amusing. Panchito produces a Mexican pinata and explains to Donald that it is the spirit of Christmas. The Christmas custom of Las Posadas is also explained through a series of still watercolor drawings. (*The Three Caballeros* would have been released in time for the 1944 Christmas season had not wartime conditions created a long delay in getting color prints. At Technicolor, Walt noted, "you have to stand in line now.")

When Donald finally breaks the pinata, he unleashes a cascade of gifts, including a toy bull, straw horse and rider, cactus, a book on Mexico, and a "magic serape" (Panchito's version of a magic carpet). The book on Mexico, like the earlier one on Brazil, becomes the doorway to several live-action Mexican scenes, through which the three caballeros periodically enter and return. The magic serape provides transportation for the trio, enabling them to visit many Mexican cities. In Vera Cruz they watch a group of costumed folk dancers, and several closeups of the dancers' feet emphasize the intricacy of the dance and the skill of the performers. A suddenly bashful Donald is finally persuaded to mix with the live-action dancers, and though he fails to master the steps of the *lilongo*, he demonstrates his prowess at jitter-bugging. "Some fun, eh keed?" shouts Panchito to Donald.

From Vera Cruz the caballeros fly to Acapulco, where they discover lots of pretty girls on the beach. These human bathing beauties scatter in mock terror as the animated magic serape swoops out of the sky accompanied by the sounds of a dive bomber and machine-gun fire, aural metaphors for this macho fantasy of male pursuit and sexual violence. Donald plays blindman's buff and other games with these girls, and it is during this sequence of the film that the most intricate coordination of live action and animation is achieved.

From Acapulco, the three travelers return through the gateway of the book on Mexico to the original setting of Donald's house. Panchito offers to show Donald Mexico City, and in the pages of the pop-up book appears Mexican actress Dora Luz, who begins to sing "You Belong To My Heart."

It is important to remember as we view these last 10 minutes of the film that our point of view shifts from outside to inside Donald's psyche. Whether the desperate images we see are a reflection of world conflict or simply the fantasies of an erratic duck is a point unanswered by the film. My own feeling, though, is that Donald's psychological make-up in *The Three Caballeros* is consistent with a personality that was formed well before World War II.

The shift to a new perspective results in several important changes. Donald remains the central figure, but we now focus on his relationship to women

rather than on his relationship to the other two caballeros. Real human beings continue to appear, but are no longer placed in realistic settings as they were before. The pace accelerates, and images frequently move at a speed slightly beyond our comprehension, making it impossible to catch all the details unless one views the film one frame at a time. The animation styles become more varied, and the frequent use of black backgrounds in this sequence serves, with the rapid pace, to disorient the viewer.

Donald's reaction to Dora and her song parallels his earlier response to Aurora Miranda, though here his romantic reverie quickly evolves into a surreal fantasy. When Donald is kissed by several pairs of animated, disembodied lips, he not only sees skyrockets, he becomes one. Donald has little control over his dream world and no privacy. When he tries to focus again on Dora and her softly romantic song, Joe Carioca and Panchito burst explosively into the scene to interrupt with a raucous, speeded-up version of "The Three Caballeros." Joe uses his umbrella as a machine gun to shoot a border of floral images around the frame, as Donald clasps his hands to his ears. When Dora reappears to embrace Donald, Panchito shatters the moment by repeatedly screaming, "Some fun, eh keed?" This line is only one of many images seen or heard earlier in the film that resurfaces to haunt Donald.

The girls from Acapulco Beach reappear to ride magic serapes of their own and weave human floral patterns in the style of Busby Berkeley. Even the game of blindman's buff is replayed, only with the roles reversed. Seven of the bathing beauties are now blindfolded instead of Donald, and they grope their way across the bottom of the frame. Their mirror image is reflected upside down on the top of the frame as Donald floats in the center. Colored silhouettes of these human forms chase Donald in a reverse of the pursuit which took place in Acapulco.

Even the live action-animation combinations are skewed in Donald's dream. In one scene, the three caballeros are seen from the waist up joined to three pairs of human female legs.

Just as the chaos seems to reach an unbearable level, the music changes to signal a new sequence. Carmen Molina, the other Mexican actress, appears in Tehuantepec costume to dance the *Zandunga*. Her live-action dancing is combined with the animated figure of Donald Duck, who holds hands with her and spins himself into multiple images, which surround the attractive actress. An overhead shot of this composition, again reminiscent of Busby Berkeley, suggests the design of a decorative Mexican plate. The scene spins with a blur into a new setting. Several animated cactus plants appear, and Molina, now in Chihuahua costume, comes forward to dance the *jesusita*, or Cactus March. Donald joins her, and even the cacti dance too, as well as play like calliope pipes and transform into small, green, duck-shaped plants which march over poor Donald. Donald pursues the retreating Carmen Molina but is confounded when she is transformed into a cactus.

A huge horn of plenty appears from which emerge Joe Carioca, Panchito, and Donald, who is inside the toy bull that we earlier saw fall from the pinata. After a sham bullfight, the bull explodes in a shower of fireworks that sends Donald sky high. His caballeros catch him in the serape, and the three watch as the fireworks spell "The End" in three languages.

The critical response to *The Three Caballeros* was mixed. James Agee dismissed the film with: "Judging by *The Three Caballeros*, a streak of cruelty which I have for years noticed in Walt Disney's productions is now certifiable." Agee did not elaborate on this "streak of cruelty," and 11 months later he listed *The Three Caballeros* among the best films of 1945.

Most of the negative reviews cited the mixture of live action and animation as a signal that Disney's imagination had run dry. John Mason Brown, critic for the *Saturday Review*, said, "the Walt Disney who proves himself to be a Good Neighbor also shows himself to be a poor artist." Five years later, when reviewing *Cinderella*, Brown suggested to his readers that "the mixture of drawn and real people in such a film as *The Three Caballeros* was one of the most unfortunate experiments since Prohibition."

But if some critics found the film disappointing, others felt it bordered on the perverse. Wolcott Gibbs complained that "a somewhat physical romance between a two-foot duck and full-sized woman, though one happens to be a cartoon and the other pleasantly rounded and certainly mortal, is one of those things that might disconcert less squeamish authorities than the Hays Office." "It might even be said," Gibbs added, "that a sequence involving the duck, the young lady, and a long alley of animated cactus plants would probably be considered suggestive in a less innocent medium."

The Three Caballeros proved popular at the box office, grossing $3.4 million, but its net profits were not as great as those of the first Good Neighbor picture, because of higher production costs. *Saludos Amigos* had grossed $1.2 million against its $296,000 cost for a profit of $400,000. *The Three Caballeros*, though it grossed nearly three times as much as *Saludos* had, cost $1,989,000 and netted only about $100,000. Though neither film was ever reissued by the studio, both have been shown on the Disney television show, and parts have been released as short subjects.

8. A Postwar Postscript

The end of the war found the Disney Studio in the best financial shape it had been in since the 1930s. Profits in 1943 and 1944 had cut the studio's million-dollar deficit (carried on the books since before Pearl Harbor) to less than $300,000, and the profits for 1945 turned this into a surplus of over $50,000.

The overwhelming cost and time required to complete a feature-length animated film like *Snow White* or *Bambi* precluded such ambitious projects in the immediate postwar years, so the Disney Studio continued to release animated features made up of shorter segments in the manner of *Saludos Amigos*.

With its tremendous demand for training films, the war had produced a boom in 16mm film and equipment, and both educators and the film industry sensed a coming revolution in teaching methods.

The great promise of a postwar explosion of film in the classroom was never fulfilled, because, as Disney soon discovered, financing such films was a major problem. No longer faced with the exigencies of war or the government's demand for rapid production, Disney was free to revert to his prewar standards of quality; but to his dismay, he found he could not afford to.

World War II, then, in the case of educational films, had offered Disney an experience he found he could not duplicate.

For the Disney Studio, the postwar 1940s marked the end of an era that had begun with Pearl Harbor. The entire decade proved to be a period of readjustment from what had been to what would be. Nineteen fifty began a new era, with greater emphasis on TV and Disney's first park than on film. *Cinderella*, Disney's first real animated feature since *Bambi* in 1942, and *Treasure Island*, the studio's first all live-action feature, were both released in 1950, and Disney's first television show, "One Hour in Wonderland," was broadcast on Christmas Day of that year.

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ROY WILLIAMS
An Interview

Roy Williams was best known as the "Big Mooseketeer" on the original Mickey Mouse Club *television program in 1955-59, but he had been a member of the Disney Studio's staff for 25 years before that program's premiere, and, although officially retired, he still worked at the studio occasionally until he died, at the age of 69, on November 7, 1976.*

He was a gag man — literally (he contributed gags to dozens of Disney cartoons) and figuratively (everyone who worked at Disney's seems to have a "Roy Williams story," about some outrageous stunt that Roy pulled, or that was pulled on Roy). It is easy to picture him as a star of the old silent comedies, improvising knockabout comedy on the set; but since he was born a few years too late, the story department of a great cartoon studio was as good a place as any for him to have made a career.

Don Peri interviewed Roy Williams in March and June 1976, as part of his preparation for an extracurricular course on Disney he was teaching at the University of California at Davis. "On both occasions," Peri said, "he was most generous with his time and talents... Roy's sense of humor, his positive outlook, and his immeasurable generosity made him an excellent representative of the Disney Studio. Speaking for myself, and I know of countless others who grew up with the Mouseketeers during the 1950s, we will miss you, Roy – because we liked you."

Peri: How did you happen to go to work at the Disney Studio?

Williams: I was a high school cartoonist at Fremont High School here in Los Angeles. In 1929, I graduated and I saw a little cartoon in a theater called *The Skeleton Dance,* made by Walt Disney. And right then I knew I wanted to work for that man; it was so well done and so beautiful. So I took six drawings to the Disney Studio, which was just a little garage-like building in the middle of a lot up on Hyperion Avenue. I met Walt and showed him the drawings and we got to talking. He said, "Well, the next time we get a desk here, we'll call you in, Roy." Some guy went on a vacation for a couple of weeks and I had his desk in about October of 1929 — I drew there for two weeks. Walt liked what I did and said, "The next time we get a desk, you're coming back to work for us permanently." On June 5, 1930, I received a call to come to work for the studio and I've been there ever since. I started out as an animator and in five years, I worked up into the story department, where I've been ever since as a gag man or a special material writer.

Peri: I understand that one of your story ideas involved Pluto swallowing a magnet.

Williams: Yes. I was learning animation and the romance wore off after five years — you know, you look into these bright lights all day and you make these little papers move and it's hard on the eyes and it's really hard work. I'd pass the story department room and there'd be guys sitting in there in big easy chairs with their eyes closed, thinking. I said, "I want that job."... I never knew I had any talent as a gag man or a gag writer, but finally from Heaven, which I credit everything to, came the thought of Donald Duck, as a plumber, and he had a dog with him, Pluto. In the picture, Pluto swallowed a magnet, a little horseshoe type, and everything stuck to his body — all of Donald's tools and wrenches and everything. This drove Donald beserk ... and it turned out to be quite a comedy (*Donald and Pluto,* 1936). Walt put me in the story department and he gave me a hundred-dollar a week raise, so I was really happy-happy and I've been that way ever since.

Peri: After you saw *The Skeleton Dance,* when you went to the studio for the first time, was it about the size you would have imagined it to be or was it smaller?

Williams: Oh, smaller! It was just this one building in the middle of a lot. One big open building and it had partitions ... and little mixed up desks. I couldn't believe it. I thought it was going to be a big studio in my mind, but it was a little place. I was the 15th guy ever hired, by the way.

Peri: Do you remember your first meeting with Walt?

Williams: When I first went into that little one-room building, I met a secretary there ... He said, "Walt will see you in a few minutes and you may go into his office" — which was nothing but a pile of junk in those days. I went in there and I waited. A little traffic boy — just my age — came in and shuffled some papers around and everything and I got to talking to this kid. We talked about the weather and I said how I wanted to work for Walt Disney and how nice it was. We had a nice 10-minute conversation. I waited a little while and then I said, "Well, maybe Mr. Disney is busy and I'd better come back another day." This young man said, "Well, I'm Walt Disney." I got red in the face. I had some drawings in my hand, and in his presence — because I respected him so much and what I had seen in his pictures — I just dropped them on his desk and I blushed. He picked them up and he kind of held them over his face to keep me from seeing him smile. It was that closeness — in those few minutes when I thought he was a traffic boy — that made him and me become friends, which lasted a lifetime. In other words, Walt and I were close

Roy Williams as he is best remembered: the "Big Mooseketeer" on the original Mickey Mouse Club *of the '50s.*

friends on the outside, which a lot of people didn't know, as well as in the studio. I just loved him so much. Always laughter and fun and beauty. I was always humble and respectful, as close as we were...because you just felt that about him; you kind of froze up with respect and love for the man...

Peri: A feeling of awe?

Williams: That's right. A feeling of awe. You felt the greatness of this man. Now the world knows, of course, and loves him and the things he did.

Peri: When you began working there, can you recall what your impressions were of the staff and of Walt?

Williams: My impressions were all wonderful. The fellows I met were wonderful people. Walt himself was just one of the guys — everybody called him Walt. I remember one thing which shows Walt's character. We used to play little softball games with Walt at the noon hour. One time the shortstop got the ball and kind of held it to let Walt get to first base. Walt stopped the game and he said, "You treat me just like you would anybody else. You throw me out here at first. Let's play it honest and right out." So that was what Walt was like. You see, I loved Walt more than anything in the world. He was God on earth to me. He was a wonderful, wonderful man....Since Walt passed away, which was a great sorrow in my life and in many other people's lives over the world, I've been working with a new studio, a new group in there without Walt. It will never be the same without the magic of Walt Disney's brain: but still it's the nicest place in the world to work, for they are wonderful guys there to this day.

Peri: I have read that in story conferences, Walt would act out the story for his staff. Some people have said that he could do pantomime as well as Charlie Chaplin.

Williams: That's right. He would get up and act out the parts just like a director or producer would, to put over to the actors what he wanted in the story. We'd be working on his stories for months and months and he'd come in and say[in reference to the storyboard sequences], "Move that down here. Move it up here," giving us a gag or an idea. We'd say, "Why didn't we think of that?" Part of his genius coming out — his magic touch.

[Concerning the gags] he might say, "That's a good gag there," or he would be just as quick to say, "That's lousy. Take it off the board."

Another strange facet: we'd do gags and then we wouldn't like them ourselves, so we would wrinkle them up and throw them in the wastebasket. Now Walt would come in at night, after we all went home...and he would go through those wastebaskets. The janitor had an order not to touch anything in the room until he went through it....The next morning, we'd come into work and there'd be a bunch of wadded drawings, straightened out, pinned up on the storyboard with Walt's note saying, "Use this. It's a good gag." He'd put them on the storyboard where he wanted them to be in sequence. That shows the thoroughness of him.

I'll tell you about Walt's thinking. This is a great factor in his success. He said, "When you're making pictures for an audience, you never play over their heads and you never play underneath them. You play right straight out at them..." In other words, don't get highbrow by going over their heads and don't insult their intelligence by doing something too corny. You play right straight at the American people and they love you and they understand everything....

Peri: If you had had the power to change Walt Disney, would there have been anything you would have changed about him?

Williams: Nothing about him. He was the most human, wonderful man in the world....This shows you his big heart: There was this big writer who was hired for a few weeks...and there was a gardener cutting a lawn outside his window. It bothered the writer, so he opened the window and yelled out, "Get out of here! Stop that noise!" Walt happened to be going down the hall and he heard this. He came into the writer's room and he said, "Be nice to that gardener. Don't yell at him. He has been here a long time, and long after you're gone, that gardener will still be with me." That is just why everybody loved him. He was just that human....

He was bashful. He had to get all kinds of courage to appear on his television show.... He was almost scared to go on stage to receive all the awards and the honorary degrees from different colleges.... He was a very humble wonderful man. But he was a genius....

Peri: What was it like to work at the Disney Studio in the 1930s — during the making of *Snow White* and prior to it?

Williams: Well, it was a big happy family. Everybody loved each other.... Everybody helped each other out with their gags and ideas. It was just like a big happy

football team with Walt the captain. And everything went smoothly and beautifully. At that time, the whole world was recognizing Walt and our pictures were the best there were. Walt got the best artists he could get anywhere in the world to work for him. It was just a happy family and everybody got along fine and the pictures showed it and showed the happiness. It was wonderful. I can't talk too much about how fun it was. It was all just fun, fun, fun.

Peri: Not like a job at all?

Williams: No, not like a job at all. At that time, Donald Duck was born, Pluto was born, Goofy was born, and we were all there watching this happen and develop — all Walt's ideas....

Peri: Did the practical jokes add to the fun of working for Disney in the 1930s?

Williams: The practical jokes that happened at that studio — anybody else would have fired us for doing them. Crazy things. Once, it was a hot day ... and I took some bottled water and walked down the hallways and poured this water on the floors. It cooled off the place. Anybody else would have fired me, but Walt got a kick out of it; he didn't even get upset. That was the type of thing — harmless practical jokes. It was just fun. I had a car, and I went out one noon hour and found a wheelbarrow in the trunk filled with water. Now how was I going to get a wheelbarrow with water out without spilling it? I carefully dipped it out with a little cup and then dumped the rest out. Then they would paint signs on car windshields, "For Sale $10.00," and it would be an expensive car! All that kind of harmless horseplay ... made everybody happy and relaxed and it made them work harder. What the hell! You could do anything you wanted to do if you were in the mood. In other words, Walt said, "Be comfortable, fellas. If you want to go home, if you want to play baseball at three o'clock, you stop work and go out and throw a baseball around — anything." And that way, they would relax and he got the very best out of his people. Not only love, but work that wasn't even work; hard work, but they didn't even know it. It was fun.

Peri: Do you think that some of this good feeling about the studio was lost during the studio strike?

Williams: Well, there was friction, but the loyal people went in, like I went in. The studio strike didn't keep me out and it didn't keep out all the other people who loved Walt. It kept out the people who would leave Walt for a raise of a dollar a week more at some other studio. There was talk about Walt not paying too much money to people, but the people

Courtesy of Dick Huemer

Roy Williams as he saw himself: he was a big man, and in this sketch from the early '40s, he caricatured himself as dwarfing Joe Grant (hanging from Williams' right arm) and Dick Huemer.

that griped about that were the ones who didn't deserve much money. They would loaf or not be so good on the job, but those who worked hard and worked good got high pay — more than any other studio paid.... They got what they deserved.

Peri: Were you worried when Walt would gamble his fortunes on such ventures as *Snow White* and Disneyland?

Williams: I worried every day that I'd be fired, and that's been going on for 47 years! That's a joke, son. No, I didn't worry. I'm not the kind that worries. I love everybody and I've never made an enemy in my life and I have peace of mind. I guess that's why Walt put me on the kid's show. Bill Walsh...a wonderful man, did the original story and divided the week up into Music Day, Circus Day, etc., and did a lot of the scripts. I was assigned, being a gag man, to do the gags— the funny things — that would happen on the show. Walt was in my office one day ... Suddenly he looked up at me and he said, "Say, you're fat and funny looking. I'm going to put you on it and call you the 'Big Mooseketeer.'" He made a big circle with his hand. I said, "What?" The next thing I knew, I was acting. I couldn't act, but I could draw fast, so I did all the drawing and I said a few words.

Peri: Weren't you known as "the fastest draw in the West" on the show?

Williams: Yes, I can draw the head of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck in six seconds.... That's another gift of God I've got.

...Then we had to get an emcee, so we looked around and hired Jimmie Dodd, who was a very fine Christian man and had a talent which was just fit for a children's show. He was a wonderful emcee. Bill Walsh, Jimmie, and I looked at thousands of kids — probably 10,000 of them — and picked 24 Mouseketeers out of that group....

Peri: I was wondering what Jimmie Dodd was like.

Williams: He was a very religious man. In fact, he was president of the Hollywood Christian Group. I had them all over here — Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, everybody — we had a meeting here in the yard. We rented chairs from Abbey Rents. We had an outdoor session here and we sang songs.... Jimmie was wonderful. He wouldn't even say, "Darn it!" — you know what I mean. He radiated that to the viewers and also to the children. Everybody on the show loved him so much.

Peri: Wasn't there also an adult on the show named Bob Amsberry?

Williams: Yes. He had his own show up

in Portland, Oregon, and he was called Uncle Bob. He came down here and we hired him ... He was very clever with singing and dialogue and everything. He was killed in a car accident [during the second year of the show] ... and Jimmie died of cancer in Honolulu [1964]....

Peri: Did you enjoy being on the *Mickey Mouse Club*?

Williams: Oh, it was nothing but pure fun [having] all those young children around talking and laughing. In between takes, we used to laugh . . . and I'd tell them stories. We had nothing but fun.

Peri: When you were working on the show, did the other people at the studio kid you about it?

Williams: No, not at all. It was just a wonderful thing that we were doing and it was going over really big all over the world.... Walt wanted regular kids with talent — just regular neighborhood kids — and he got them.... Some of them had great talent like Bobby Burgess, whom you now see on the Lawrence Welk Show. Annette was beautiful, and because of her beauty and all, she received thousands of fan letters a week...also, all kinds of gifts and rings, which she would send back to the people who sent them to her. Boys were in love with her, you know.

Peri: I recall reading that you could turn someone's scribbling into a drawing.

Williams: Yes, and that was especially beautiful to me.... I traveled about ten years for Disney — a few months out of the year back East in New York and all through New England — to promote our pictures. But then we also visited hospitals and retarded children's homes. I'd let these little retarded children scribble, and when I made a bird or a dog or something out of their scribbles and they saw that they had done that, they'd press it to their chests and some of them cried. It was a lot of fun seeing a retarded child scribble something and have it turn into a picture for him. I usually let them do it in red ink and then I'd finish the sketches in black ink.... It was a beautiful experience.

Peri: When I was growing up, the *Mickey Mouse Club* was one of the biggest things in my life. Now, however, some books and articles have been very critical of it . . .

Williams: The studio itself has been unhappy about some of the things written about it. But even Jesus Christ has critical things written about Him and they killed Him on the cross! So no matter who you are or how wonderful you are, people are going to talk about you....You just have to push that out of your mind and live your own life and be yourself.... If I read anything or hear anything unpleasant, I push it in the back of my mind so far that I forget about it. I've got that ability for which I am lucky.

Courtesy of Homer Brightman

Walt Disney in action before a storyboard for Pinocchio, *c. 1938: "He would get up and act out the parts just like a director or producer would, to put over to the actors what he wanted in the story."*

Peri: I recently read your cartoon books, *How's the Back View Coming Along?* and *The Secret World of Roy Williams*....

Williams: Well, Walt read them, too. I was drawing for *The New Yorker* and I was using gags in there that he could use in his pictures, so he said, "Roy, stop it." He had paid my way through Chouinard Art School for five years and put thousands of dollars into training me and here I was giving it away to a magazine. It was fun; it was a hobby; and it was an honor to be in *The New Yorker*. Walt asked me to stop, so I did, naturally....He said, "I'll pick your brain." . . . I didn't mind at all, because I realized he was right.

Peri: You also contribute gags to live action films, don't you?

Williams: That's right. You can almost recognize my wild-like cartoony gags. They've got to be logical and I had a lot of trouble getting from the wild cartoon gags, which were impossible, to what they could really do with live action.

Peri: Are you still happy with the Disney Studio of today?

Williams: Yes, because the guy that's running the place today grew up with Walt, too.

Peri: Card Walker?

Williams: Yes. Card Walker was a young boy in, I think, the camera department. It was kind of a flunky job, like a traffic boy. I remember talking to him at that time. I said, "You know, the place is growing and someday if you work hard while the other kids play, you might be president." And today, he is president of the company!...I knew them all. I saw them all come to work and get their jobs. On their first days there, I used to go out and talk to them — tell them about the place....

Peri: I understand that you have been working at the studio even since your retirement.

Williams: Yes. I retired at 65, but as a free agent, my own employer, I can go back if they want me. I'm the only one they keep calling back and back. They've told me — it's not bragging, but it's a fact — "You were associated with and so close to Walt for so many years...that you are the only one who has absorbed his humor and you can give us the gags like Walt might have given them to us."...Now it sounds like I'm bragging, but I'm not. I'm very humble about that. I'm the only gag man ever brought back who has been retired, so it's a real honor. And I have nothing but fun there thinking of gags and ideas.

With Disney on Olympus

An Interview with Dick Huemer

Dick Huemer worked for animation studios for more than 50 years, starting with the Raoul Barre studio in 1916. The bulk of his professional life, from 1933 on, was spent at the Walt Disney studio, where he worked as an animator, director, and story director, on some of the most memorable Disney shorts and features.

Joe Adamson recorded six interviews with Huemer in 1968 and 1969, as part of the American Film Institute University of California at Los Angeles Oral History program. Excerpts from those interviews have already been published in the American Film Institute's magazine,* AFI Report, *and in* Funnyworld *No. 16. In the following excerpt, Huemer discusses his work at the Disney studio in its heyday. This excerpt, like those previously published, has been edited by Huemer.*

Joe Adamson's book Tex Avery: King of Cartoons *was published by Popular Library in 1975; he is also the author of a book on the Marx Brothers* (Groucho, Harpo, Chico and Sometimes Zeppo), *and is a prize-winning filmmaker* (Political Cartoon).

Adamson: How was it that you got the opportunity to work for Disney again, after turning him down in 1930 to take a job with Charles Mintz? Did he make you another offer or did you go to him?

Huemer: I went to Ben Sharpsteen, who was my friend, and said, "Well, Ben, I'd like to come and work for Walt now." And Ben just went and told Walt, and that was all it was.

Adamson: When you started to work for Disney, did you do any animating?

Huemer: I animated on a lot of his pictures, like *Grasshopper and the Ants, The Tortoise and the Hare,* and *Water Babies.* My first animation was in *Lullaby Land* and a number of *Silly Symphonies.* Then I animated on *The Wise Little Hen;* which was the first time Donald Duck appeared, the first time they used his voice. They hadn't "found" him yet; they hadn't determined how to use him. He became a cranky character later on, but in this he was just a duck who spoke with Clarence "Ducky" Nash's voice. And I animated on *The Band Concert;* which Richard Schickel says is one of the best of his shorts. I did The Duck in that picture.

I think my last actual animation was on *Snow White.* It was a sequence that was cut out, the bed-building sequence. That's how Walt worked. He did a lot of buckshoting around, trying things so he'd always have a wealth to cut from. He could always cut to the bone, so what was left was great. And then there was an eating sequence. That was completely animated, but also cut out. These were real big sequences.

Adamson: That's the one where Dopy coughs up the soap that he swallowed in the other scene, isn't it? They showed the pencil tests on television.

Huemer: I worked on the TV show. We took these old drawings and we cleaned them up and shot them, so it could be used to show people on TV. These are pencil drawings, as you recall. You may have noticed that it was kind of indistinct and vague in spots, and fuzzy.

Adamson: It was beautiful. It's a great scene.

Huemer: It's a good sequence. Well, that goes to show you. Walt had to cut something. And this was something that didn't tell the story, wasn't necessary.

Adamson: When did the Dwarfs build beds?

Huemer: It was before Snow White got into trouble with the witch. They're all sitting and thinking, with a beat — oom-bah-oom-bah-oom-bah-bah. And then one dwarf would say, "Why don't we do this," and the other would yell, "No!" It goes on like that until finally Sleepy yawns and says, "Why don't we build her a bed?" And then they all shout, "Yes! Hooray! We'll build her a bed!" and off they go. That's how it started. I remember one of the things I animated was one of the dwarfs on top of a pole with a chisel and he sneezed, and the force of it spiralled him down the pole so that the chisel carved a beautiful scroll. Stuff like that — — gags. It would have been a good sequence, too.

Adamson: How much of that was finished?

Huemer: Pencil tests only. Then Walt decided he didn't want it, so we didn't clean it up.

I got out of actual animation way back in '38. I'd finally had enough. I'd really had it. As a matter of fact that's how I became a director. I got to the point where it bothered me even to animate a figure across the page. The fact that here he was way over here and now I had to bring him over there. I had gotten fed up. Let him do it by himself! So that's when I went to Walt and told him I felt I was through with animation. Was there an opening for a director? Luckily there happened to be. And direction at Disney's is a whole different thing, and a whole big story: what directors did at Disney's and what they didn't do. And I think directing was the most fun of anything I ever did. I only directed two pictures, *The Whalers* and *Goofy and Wilbur,* but I'm sure that was the most fun I ever had. It was just great. For one thing, you were presented with a great, finely worked out story. This was given to you. Walt had worked on this story, you had, too, but very little yet. But here it was now on your walls on story boards. There it was, okayed by Walt. All you had to do now was to make it. And this was a wonderful thing. You knew that Walt already liked it. All you had to do was to bring it to life. Which you did, with your animators, and with a musician, and you timed it, and you recorded your dialogue, and you looked at rushes. You had sweatbox sessions where the animators showed their stuff and you criticized it, and then you had it inked and photographed and cut. It was great, just creative as can be. Then you went to a preview and you felt that the laughs were partly for you. You knew that you had had something personal to do with them. And knowing you had pleased Walt made you feel great.

WALT DISNEY

Huemer: Disney never imagined taking the easy way out. That's certainly in my opinion one of the secrets of his success. Never to leave a thing until it had been milked in every possible way, and working it out in the best possible manner no matter how much time it took or how much money it cost. He built his pictures that way. Actually, he made many sequences just to see if they would work. Even though they weren't essential to the story, he'd go ahead just to see, to try, always to go for the touchdown play.

Adamson: What did Walt do with character and motivation? Did he discuss them over the storyboards?

Huemer: Did he? You bet your life! Storyboards! Sweatbox! Lunchroom! Sure he did. That's the one thing that we got all the time. When I went to work for him, he was doing *Silly Symphonies,* and the characterizations were very clear cut in those things. Like for instance when they did *The Tortoise and the Hare*. It was clearly laid out to have the hare act the way he did, bombastic and boastful, yet talented. That was good, clear characterization. The tortoise was definitely staged as a stupid guy who could good-naturedly be taken advantage of. Actually he won by default. This was the kind of strong characterization that Walt always insisted on. If anybody else had done *The Tortoise and the Hare* it would have been a series of assorted gags about running, one after another. Not all this clever, boastful stuff like stopping with the little girls and bragging and being admired, and showing off how he could play tennis with himself. Walt would take stories and act them out at a meeting, kill you laughing they were so funny. And not just because he was the boss either. And there it would be. You'd have the feeling of the whole thing. You'd know exactly what he wanted. We often wondered if Walt could have been a great actor, or a comedian. The acting in them was what made his pictures so great. And the characterizations in *Snow White* were beautiful as well. Just think, taking each one of those dwarfs and making each one an entirely different personality. Seven of the little bastards! It was just unheard of!

© Walt Disney Productions

Two character layout drawings from The Band Concert *(1935), the first Mickey Mouse cartoon in Technicolor. Animators were given such layouts when they began work on a scene, as guides for their animation. These layouts were given to Huemer, who was the principal animator of Donald Duck in that picture.*

Walt worked out his stories down to the last blink of the eye. In other cartoon studios we might do little pre-sketches, but there was no time for real analysis. But that's what Walt was able to do, give time to do these things, because he now for the first time had the money coming in on his licensee projects. Even so, he worked on a pretty short budget; we had to have a picture finished about every two weeks. We'd sometimes come back at night just to talk about the stories and save animation time. I don't know how other studios operated around that time, I guess they were more or less one like the other. All I know is that nobody else could put the meticulous care that Walt put into the stories, the perfectionism. The inventiveness that he supplied wasn't coming out of anybody else on the outside. He was one of the greatest story minds ever.

We all went to work for Disney as dedicated people who appreciated what he was trying to do and felt we were in on something historic. Like disciples who might have worked with Michelangelo, we were part of a thing that was maybe going to last and that had a chance to be

remembered. We were all enthusiastic and had what we thought was a beautiful studio. This made you feel good. Every once in in a while, Walt would throw a luncheon in the little studio dining room with the stained glass window at one end and a long table down the middle. Here we'd discuss the next story, presented by the story man and musician and were invited to criticize freely or to add improvements and gags. All this was stimulating and wonderful.

Did I ever tell you about when Walt did the Midas story [*The Golden Touch*?] He was out of a director at the time, and Walt himself decided he would direct a short. So he got Freddy Moore, the best animator in the place, for little characters, cute stuff, and Norm Ferguson to do the Midas, the big character. And Walt personally made out the exposure sheets, sat down just like we directors did, and did all the work. And with the best men and the best brain in the business, how do you think the picture turned out? Lousy. And he had to admit it himself. Now, isn't that a funny thing? When it came right down to it, he couldn't do it, and yet he could get it out of other people. This is a strange thing. The picture was not funny, it wasn't convincing, you weren't with it, it just wasn't there.

There's something I have to mention and that is, great as Walt undeniably was, he never in the opinion of some would have accomplished what he did if he hadn't attracted such talent. I've heard guys say, "All right, Walt's a genius, but he couldn't have done it with Zulus or Eskimos." Like Napoleon had to have brilliant generals and marshals who were talented tacticians in their own right, Walt had to have this group of, as I call them, his paladins.

Abramson: How did he attract them?

Huemer: Take me, for instance. When I turned Walt's offer down in 1930 to go to work from New York, the moment I turned it down, I regretted that I hadn't accepted. Because Walt was doing the kind of animation that you could be proud of. We're not in the business just entirely to make money. We picked the animation profession because we loved it, we wanted to be animators, we liked to draw. So every animator regardless can't help admiring superior stuff or wanting to have his hand in it. And Walt was then such a thundering success that I really bitterly regretted that I had turned him down and gone with Mintz and just frittered away three years on making good money but doing little else that I could be proud of. And Ward Kimball, who was undeniably one of Walt's paladins, told me just the other day that when he was a lad up in Santa Barbara he couldn't wait to come down to ask for a job with Walt. Aspiring artists would set their sights on Walt Disney and most of those who had the talent made it.

Walt was always working on story. He was forever picking your brain, even if you happened to be at a social affair with him. Anything you said he'd be listening to, cocking his ear, and recording everything with that marvelously retentive brain that never forgot a thing. Not a single thing! This I venture to guess was the core of his genius, this wonderful memory. And, of course, his way of reaching back into that memory and picking out things and applying them right to the heart of any subject. He could go right to the nub of the problem, no matter what it was. Even if it was something as minor as the design of a uniform for the employees at Disneyland, even the buttons, he would have an opinion on it. Nothing was too small for him to venture an opinion on and his was generally the best one. Oh, maybe once out of 20 times somebody else would have a better one—but generally it was his. That was my boss.

Adamson: You seem to have a lot of respect for this man.

Huemer: One couldn't help feeling awe in the presence of genius. This is an actual physical feeling. It reaches out, it touches you, like electricity. We could feel him coming down the hall, figuratively our hair would stand on end, the backs of our necks would tingle—you could hear him coughing as he approached. Not that you were afraid of him; nobody was afraid of Walt physically. Once when he came into a room and guys jumped back to their boards, he bawled them out saying, "Don't be afraid of me. I don't want to see you jumping into your seats like that. If you ever do it again, you'll year from me! Plenty! I don't mind you standing around. If you feel restless go on out and walk in the garden!" Ha! I'd like to see you do that in front of Fred Quimby or Leon Schlesinger. Those guys loved to see everybody at their boards working as if in a sweatshop. Not Disney; he was the first one to introduce the idea of relaxing the relentless grind on the artists. It was refreshing. And as a result he got more work out of them because they worked out of regard for him and love for what they were doing. And the fact that, as I said before, they were doing something which a lot of them thought would be imperishable. High-sounding words, but it's true. Walt was in a lot of ways a very kindly man, a very fatherly old-fashioned guy in many ways. He started a savings and loan company for his employees, and instituted all kinds of incentive programs. If you did a good job on a scene, you would get a bonus without asking or expecting it. I remember getting a thousand dollars once. One animator got $3,000. All extra, mind you, outside of salary just for having done something that pleased him. Walt was always willing to remunerate people for doing good work. He loved and appreciated good animation. Direction really didn't mean that much to him at the time because of the fact that he was really the producer-director, and the men who called themselves directors were, you might say, glorified assistant directors. They did a lot of the routine work like timing and handing it out, and rough criticism, those technical tasks that had to be done. Of course, they also put in their own touches; but everybody did that.

FANTASIA

1. 'Pastoral Symphony'

Adamson: Was the *Pastoral Symphony* your idea?

Huemer: No, you can't blame me. We were going to use something by Pierne from a French musical comedy or operetta called *Cydalese et le Chevre Pied.* It was the section called "The Entrance of The Little Fauns." Only ran *three* minutes; we had a Victor recording of it. That's what gave us the idea of using Greek mythology and its creatures, fauns and centaurs (from which were evolved centaurettes) and all the Greek pantheon. Joe Grant and I worked with it quite a while, but we couldn't make any visual contact. It was very strange music. If you ever can get a hold of it and play it, you'll love it I'm sure. It goes like this ... (Huemer hummed the tune) ... and it bounces along without stopping, never a pause or slowdown. So it didn't give us any kind of a handle or change of pace, or contrasting phraseology. You have to have accents and phrases to work with when you transpose something from music to animation. You've got to have resting points in other words, and we found none. This music would just go plugging straight ahead. Naturally, we couldn't stop it, we couldn't cut it, like for when, here come the fauns, and there go the centaurs! And that's Jove throwing thunderbolts! We just couldn't find places to put all this fine pictorial material. So Joe and I looked around for another piece of music and decided on Beethoven, the *Pastoral Symphony,* which according to Ludwig is about someone's feelings upon their journey into the country, and other bucolic impressions. So we went ahead and laid it out to the *Pastoral* and presented it to Walt and he

went along with it. But Stokowski didn't like it at all. Not a damn bit! He said, "Beethoven didn't mean this, he meant to portray *human* reactions and their salubrious feelings in the country."

But somehow Walt brushed aside his objections and we went ahead.

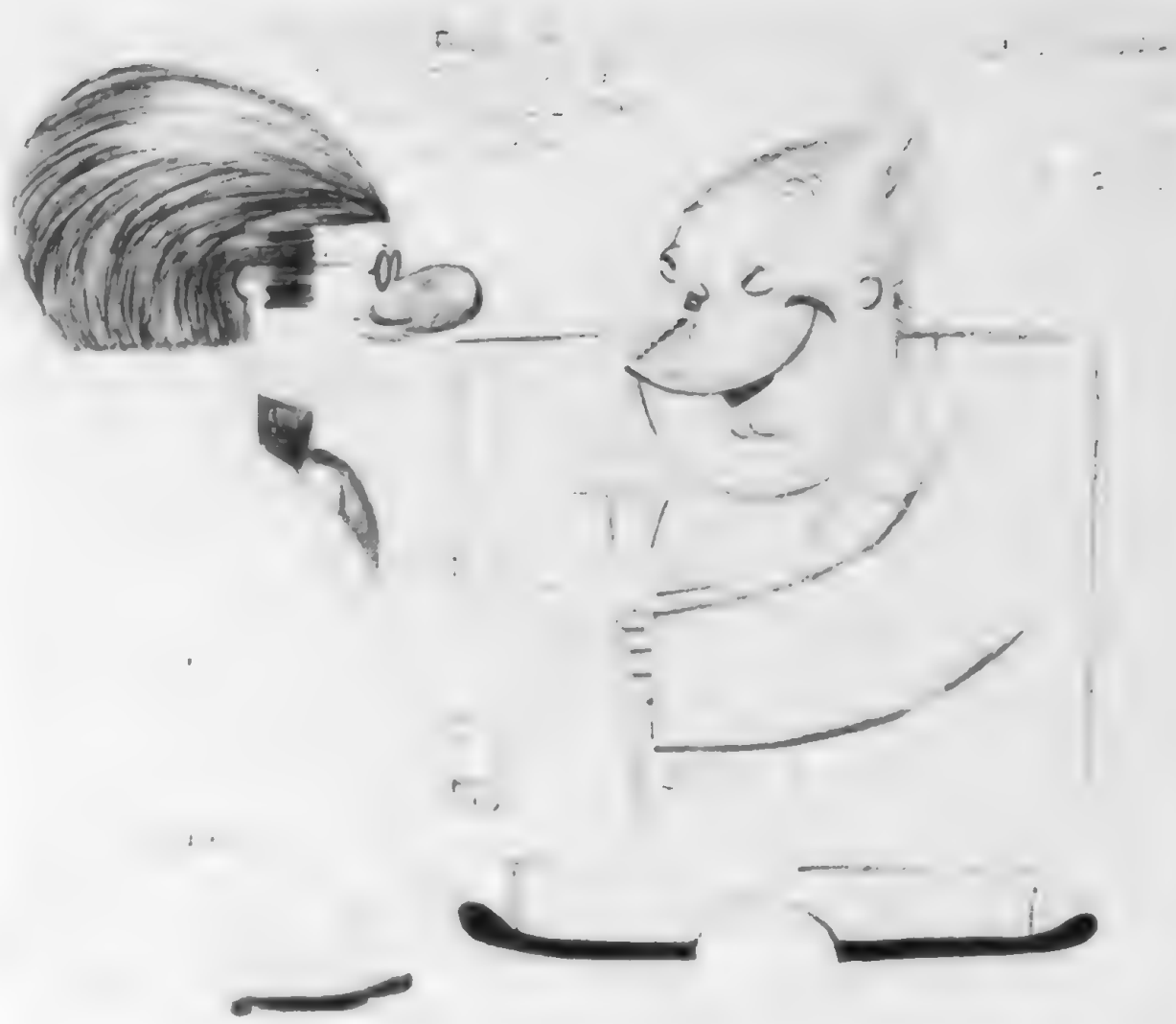
We had a recording by Toscanini to work with. The notes of the *Pastoral* are the same no matter who plays them, so we figured the timing would be about the same too. Toscanini may have had a different interpretation, some spots might be a little faster than another conductor's. But that would be the only difference — fundamentally we knew what we had to deal with in timing. So we cut new acetates and made copies for the people who were working on it. There were four groups, for the four different movements, and the idea was for each to play their record and see what ideas anybody could get that would fit the music. We knew basically what we were going to do, because we had decided it was going to be about Greek mythology. So we had that to start with, before we even sat down with the records: this was going to be a thing that had to do with Mount Olympus and fauns and all the Greek mythological characters, except they would be caricatured, they would even be funny in spots, like Bacchus, for instance. So these four different units maybe sometimes had only two guys working on their section, and they would play the record all day and make sketches to fit what they thought it might portray. And Joe and I would come in every day, and we'd all sit around and talk; and then we'd go into the next unit and do the same. And so day by day, it would build, very slowly build. Finally after a week or two we'd have something satisfactory up there on the boards, When you played the record and pointed with a pointer at the different pictures, you could follow the flow and blending of the music and story and get some idea of what we were trying to do.

Walt hadn't come in yet. He was busy elsewhere. It was really Joe and my decision when it was good enough for him to see. We never presented anything to Walt that we weren't pretty sure of. You had to have confidence in it yourself. We'd say, "Let's go with this. This is it!" Then Walt would come in and occasionally he would say no and scrap the whole thing. But I must say that generally, especially on a picture like *Fantasia*, which had to do with music and just isn't everybody's cup of tea, that he went along with most of it. He had very wonderful ideas, of course, he would always have them. Then we would add Walt's suggestions and perhaps noodle up the sketches better. Other artists would give us an idea of what it might look like in color and treatment. And when this was done, we had the stuff on the boards with some nice colored things and when we played the record, you could almost see and feel *Fantasia* right up there. Then a director would come in, and it was given to him to actually make. But before any of that we had to go to Philadelphia with Stokowski and a technical crew and record it to his satisfaction. Walt's idea was to get the benefit of the way Stoky would interpret it, although he had already guided us greatly by what we had planned in the story. We had suggested cuts in the *Pastoral*. You know it repeats itself all over again, I think in the second movement. So we didn't use that; it would have made it too long. Little changes like that. We went to Philadelphia, to the Academy of Music, where Walt had worked out his idea of having nine separate sound tracks. We had nine different command posts in the basement of the theater, each one recording its own sound track from its own mike placed in a different spot in the orchestra.

A funny incident happened when w were recording *Dance of the Hours*. Remember the hippopotamus dance? Stoky said, "Now I'm going to try to play this music funny." Walt and Joe and I and the rest of the staff sat in the back of the theater and listened to what they were doing. So they played the music funny, with everybody trying to make their version of funny sounds. It was awful. And Stoky finally rapped on the stand and said laughingly, "No. Let's forget that. I guess there's no such thing as funny music." So they played it straight. But you see, Walt had gone along with the experiment of having these marvelous musicians trying to be funny, blowing strange notes and whatever they were doing. But there's no such thing as funny music, if anybody should ask you.

Adamson: Why was it that you and the key story directors were taken to Philadelphia?

Huemer: Just Joe and I went to Philadelphia from the story creative end. We had to know what was going on. That was one of Walt's policies, to keep people in on everything, to keep the pot boiling, This is an insight into Walt, though really I've often wondered why we were taken to Philadelphia at all. Once while they were playing they did something that I didn't think was right, considering that I knew the picture about as well as anybody. I turned to Walt after it was over and said, "I didn't like that certain whatever it was." And Walt said, "Oh, that's all right. He knows what he's doing up there. Let's not interfere." So I just kept my mouth shut after that, even



"Somewhere in the 1930's" Huemer has recalled, "the studio decided to give all its employees numbers according to their seniority. This is simply a play on the subject between Bill Cottrell and myself." The drawing is by T. Hee, the most highly regarded caricaturist in animation.

though I still think I was right. It was nothing bad; it was just that I thought something could be a little better. After all I'm sort of a half-assed musician myself. But I guess Walt figured we're paying this guy $20,000 (or whatever it was) so let's get our money's worth. That was it. So you may well ask why we went, because that's all we did, we sat there while they played for about five days and then we came home.

Adamson: All expenses paid?

Huemer: Of course. Once in a while Walt would introduce me as "Dick Huemer, the guy who knows all the good restaurants in Philadelphia." Simply because being a New Yorker, I had gone to Philadelphia once in a while, and happened to know several of the good restaurants like Bookbinder's. And he couldn't get over that, that I knew all the good restaurants in Philadelphia! He had the habit of cataloging people. Any little thing like that could catalogue you. It would never get out of his mind; there was a place where that item was stored and it could never be eradicated. He may be dead now, but I bet it's still there! Or he might introduce me to someone and say, "Meet Dick Huemer. He goes to operas." That's why I got on *Fantasia*, incidentally, because he knew that I went to operas, you see? In my New York days, I used to go to the opera. Didn't we all? Didn't we all hear Caruso and the rest in our day? You bet we did!

Adamson: How many people went to Philadelphia?

Huemer: There was me, Joe Grant, and Ed Plumb; a guy named Csillag, who was his cutter; Bill Garity, who was the sound engineer; Walt, of course. Maybe a secretary. Some electricians and men experts from the sound department. Guys that I didn't know. Maybe ten, twelve. That's about it.

Adamson: Did he have any trouble justifying this?

Huemer: Are you kidding? Walt spent the money. If Walt had said, "Take this money and throw it out the window," do you think anybody would question him? "Throw it out the window! If Walt says so, that's right!" It's his money. No, he made all those decisions. He was a real, absolute monarch there. Why not? He made it.

2. 'Rite of Spring'

Huemer: We had many preliminary meetings before we chose any of the episodes or musical numbers in *Fantasia*. And out of nowhere one day Walt said, "Say, is there any kind of music that would support the idea of creation, or the beginning of life on this world?" And before he was finished saying it almost, Stokowski said, "Why, yes! There's the *Sacre*!" Walt said, "The sock?" And Stokowski said, "Yes, *Sacre du Printemps* by Stravinsky!" — which means *Rite of Spring*. And Walt said, "Maybe that's what we're looking for." Stokowski said, "It isn't really about creation of the world, but it is music that was written to depict life in primitive Siberia among the wild, almost stone-age people—their dances, and their religious rites. It's very, very weird, out-of-this-world music." So Walt said, "Let's hear it." We happened to have a recording of it, and got the record and played it. And that was it. Walt said, "This is great!" So there's the genesis of part of *Fantasia*.

Philadelphia, 1939, the bar of the Hotel Warwick. Walt Disney is at center, flanked by Joe Grant (left) and Dick Huemer. "Walt had them take this picture to tease the boys back in the studio," Huemer recalls.

Adamson: Stravinsky wasn't very pleased about that.

Huemer: We never saw Stravinsky. At least, I never did. There are various versions on that. One is that when Stravinsky saw the finished project, he said that's what he meant, and that's exactly what he had had in mind. Although I don't believe it. I don't think Beethoven would have said that's what he meant, and that's exactly what he had in mind if he saw what we did to his *Pastoral Symphony* either.

Adamson: Well, would that bother you, if he did say that wasn't what he had in mind?

Huemer: Why should it? I mean we're in the entertainment business, and music's a very arbitrary thing anyway, isn't it? You can say a certain piece of music represents a storm; the next guy says no, it represents a battle, or another guy says it represents an earthquake—and they would all be right—or wrong, because who's to say? So we say that Beethoven's music reminds us of fauns cavorting and centaurs and the rest. So go prove it doesn't!

I remember after a meeting near the beginning of *Rite* there was a quiet, very nondescript interlude that flopped on its first presentation to Walt. Even he couldn't come right up with the answer right off so he got up and said, "Well, I leave it in your lap, Dick. Work it out!" He would often do that. And it was work it out and no excuses. You can imagine what it's like. There's nothing to start with, except for the music, only blank boards and a lot of dinosaurs. What do they do? What can this music possibly suggest?

So work it out we did. Other parts of the dinosaur stuff were less troublesome. Where music is fierce and loud, it suggests a battle of behemoths. This wailing sorrowful sound could be the trek of dinosaurs seeking water where the earth has dried and the mountains have risen and deserts prevail, for the swamps drained . . . . they have to go find water. Stravinsky's music suggested this eerie, mournful scene of staggering through the swirling dust. You see some fall dead and others struggle on. They become silhouettes in the murk. We visualize their extinction to the strains of the music.

Adamson: What basis did you work this out on? Did you do any research as far as constructing or creating the sequence?

Huemer: Of course. We had to get

books on dinosaurs and learn all about them and how to draw them, according to reliable authorities. Bob Sterner was very good at drawing these things. He made many of the inspirational drawings. Particularly impressive, I remember, besides the dinosaur stuff, was the formation of the earth, where the red-hot crust is bubbling and volcanoes overflow and lava runs down the mountain sides into the sea and the hissing steam swirls up. Sterner was very good at making those original sketches, great impressive drawings in pastel where you could feel the heat. It was remarkable how those directors who followed up were able to duplicate what those story drawings looked like. And it was a case of they jolly well had better, because Walt had said, "That's what they should look like; this is great, this is the feeling I want. Make it come to life."

Adamson: Tell me something about the research you had to do for the dinosaur sequence, and the microscopic organisms.

Huemer: Well, there's nothing to tell, you can find all that material in books, naturally.

Adamson: Did you do that?

Huemer: Yes, that was part of my job as with everybody else connected with the project. We all became ardent researchers. It was quite educational.

Adamson: The program mentions all these people, Andrews and Julian Huxley and others. What did they do? What was their function?

Huemer: They never came to the studio if that's what you mean.

Adamson: It [the program] claims they were there and saw you through the whole production.

Huemer: I didn't see them! If the program says that, I never read it.

Adamson: It says they were associates and helped you check scientific accuracy, your authenticity.

Huemer: Well, maybe somebody asked them. Perhaps by mail or telephone. Maybe Walt did. I wasn't there when it happened. It wasn't too important anyway once we had the basic facts in hand. Believe me, it wasn't all that important at all.

We were influenced a great deal by a fellow named Knight, who illustrated booklets that were issued by the Union Oil Company, some giveaway gimmick at gas stations. You may have seen them—we were greatly indebted to those. Bob Sterner and a guy named Major, as well as Elmer Plummer, did a lot of the preliminary sketches. I can't recall the others offhand. These inspirational sketches were terribly important. In any picture, you can't overestimate them. And again when we had the storyboards up, you could play the music and get the sense of the whole picture right there. It was up to the animator and director then to put the right action, weight and feeling into the dinosaurs.

In the dinosaur fight, we animated them as if they were creatures capable of pretty fast movement. As a matter of fact, maybe they weren't. I found that out later, but even so it's conjectural, isn't it? Since they were heavy and unwieldy a dinosaur fight was probably like two turtles battling. We didn't know, and we had to do it all in the framework established by the music. And from the chords and musical configurations we got lightning-like thrusts or lunges. We didn't care too much about the scientific end of it; we were being entertaining.

3. 'Nutcracker Suite'

Huemer: I remember what fun it was working on the Tchaikovsky stuff, *The Waltz of the Flowers,* for instance. The wonderful leaves and plant stuff, nature forms. I had this little group and I'd visit them every day, and we'd sit and talk; that's how a story director works. You say, "What's new today?" Positive: "Hey, that's good!" or Negative: "It isn't going to work," and you talk a lot, toss around ideas, and you get it worked up and drawn up to the point where Walt can finally come in. Then he sits down with the group and takes it all apart or adds new stuff, and that's how the thing was worked out. I remember it was such fun because there were three girls doing the storyboards and they would pick flowers and weeds in the outside lots and bring them in. You'd be surprised how good looking these things were. They would use them for designs and for some of the little characters like the thistles. Surprisingly interesting. They were a very dedicated group. People who work on storyboards are generally fine artists. Yet they don't know too much about animation, or ever do get into animation. These are what we call story sketch men. They are very skilled people.

In *The Waltz of the Flowers* we used special cels that had a tooth or roughness to them, and when we worked the color over that surface it gave the effect of pastel. If you look at the film, next time you see it, see if you don't get the feeling of pastel drawings in motion. The story sketches were done on black paper with pastel which gave a very grainy effect. You can tell it's pastel and not flat water color or paint. Walt very much wanted to retain that effect on the screen, so they cast around till they could get a cel with a rough surface. It looks like pastel in operation. A very lovely effect and another first for Disney.

Adamson: Did this come up in the story conferences?

Huemer: Sometimes, sometimes not. Walt would say, "We've got a certain look to these story sketches, a pastel look. It's good. How can we retain it?" As much as saying, "That's an order," and somebody would go ahead and work it out. Walt, of course, had other things to do, and whoever was assigned to it would jolly well work it out.

The animators had nothing to do with *Fantasia* until Walt had okayed the storyboards on the picture and a director was assigned to it. This particular section was directed by Sam Armstrong. He got the storyboards, then he sat down with the layout men who laid it out, and he timed it, and then the animators came in. The animators never had anything to do with the story in any form. Not at Disney's. Oh, occasionally Walt would say, "Let's have a meeting with the crew" and everybody in the studio would be there, practically. But that was unusual, that was not the regular way of working.

Adamson: The director was somebody who never sat in on story conferences, then.

Huemer: Not right at first. You never knew who would get the story until it was finished and okayed. Then it would be handed over. Or the director might be at some of the very last ones, when we knew exactly what we were doing and Walt liked it and we knew exactly who was going to make it. Then as it moved along, Walt never stopped improving it, polishing it. That's the beauty of Walt's place. A picture was never finished until it was previewed. And even then it wasn't finished sometimes.

DUMBO

Adamson: Where's the story that *Dumbo* comes from?

Huemer: I never saw it, but they say it was on a little strip that was given away on a cereal box. Or maybe it was even printed on the outside, I don't know. But it had the basic elements of the story: the little elephant who had big ears, was made fun of, learned to fly, and was redeemed. All in just a few panels. Well, we took it from there, had a few story meetings, then Joe Grant and I wrote it up a chapter at a time and submitted it to Walt. He used to come down and say, "That's coming along good. We'll make it!"

Then we got sketch men and story men and went to work and put together what

we call a Leica reel. A Leica reel was a way of presenting a storyboard with the individual pictures on a filmstrip that was run through a Leica projector. You'd flip over a picture and talk about it, then flip over the next. You could visualize the story quite well. Come to think of it, we did some of *Fantasia* that way, but I don't think they use it any more.

Adamson: So you did sketches ...

Huemer: Which were photographed on 35mm film. For instance, "Here Dumbo comes in . . . *click!* . . . and there's his mother . . . *click!* . . . and she picks him up . . . *click!* . . . and the ringmaster enters, and so on, whatever.

Adamson: And you showed these to whom?

Huemer: To Walt. This was how we often held a story meeting. Sometimes we had rough Leica reels in pencil, and later we would make a color reel.

Adamson: When you first got *Dumbo*, what form was it in?

Huemer: Somebody had started working on it and there were quite a few sketches that I remember, but no storyboards yet. Mostly talk, getting together with Walt, and taking notes, and studying them. *Dumbo* was put aside a while to concentrate on another picture, I suppose, then Joe Grant and I picked it up.

Adamson: On your own initiative?

Huemer: Yes, we were allowed to, even encouraged by Walt: "See what you guys can get." He was very good about that. Sometimes, you didn't know it, but two or three other crews might have been assigned to the same thing. Walt had a trick of pitting men against each other that way; he loved that kind of conflict. In fact, we thought it kind of annoyed him when men got along together too well. He thought rivalry was good, it made sparks, it stimulated people. I must say the results seemed to justify the means.

Adamson: How long was this version that you and Joe Grant did together?

Huemer: It was about that thick. (Huemer indicated half an inch with his two fingers.) On extra long papers, big long ones.I have a copy of it. It has all the basic elements. Not that we had made them all up; many had been talked about. And the basic story line was well established.

Adamson: How closely did it stick to this story when you finally did it?

Huemer: Well, nothing ever sticks closely. A picture's a thing that grows like a snowball. As I said before, everybody adds to it, the director, the animator. And then when it's done, it can still be added to. So it's hard to say.

Adamson: Tell me about the things you did to get Walt interested in *Dumbo*, the story.

A caricature of Dick Huemer by Joe Grant.

Huemer: There were little devices in the writing. Like I drew a teardrop on the page which said, "Read no further unless you are of strong character and can take it, because what we're going to tell you, you won't believe—see you tomorrow!" Sort of kept the suspense from day to day. Very corny writing, but we thought it was a good way to intrigue him. Actually Walt was very susceptible to stimulation. People would show him drawings. Joe Grant was very adept at this. And he'd light up and get enthusiastic. Little character sketches by Joe stimulated him into doing the centaurs and other mythological characters. He'd say, "That's good, we ought to do something like that!" And we'd be off and running with his approval. Again, it was a case of bringing logs to the "Head Beaver" for him to build his dam. Not that he wasn't capable of getting his own logs. He could get you the biggest, funniest logs you ever saw.

When you write something or do something, you analyze it for the most effective approach. You can't really say that there's any hard and fast rule for it. But all along the line, in every phase of production, you're trying, if you have anything at all on the ball, to do it in some way that has never been done before.

To make it the funniest, if comedy is what's called for. Or, if it's tragedy, which occurs in *Dumbo* when his mother is locked up, what is the saddest thing you can do? You lock her up, she's caged, it's night time, she rattles her chains ... it's simply a matter of working and picking away, discarding things and coming up finally with what's best—most showworthy.

Adamson: So you had to work hard until you had this result?

Huemer: And how! None of that first blush stuff. Sure, Walt would often get big inspirations; and naturally other people would, too. But generally it was all hard work, analyzing and re-analyzing...re-re-re-analyzing, discarding and starting all over again.

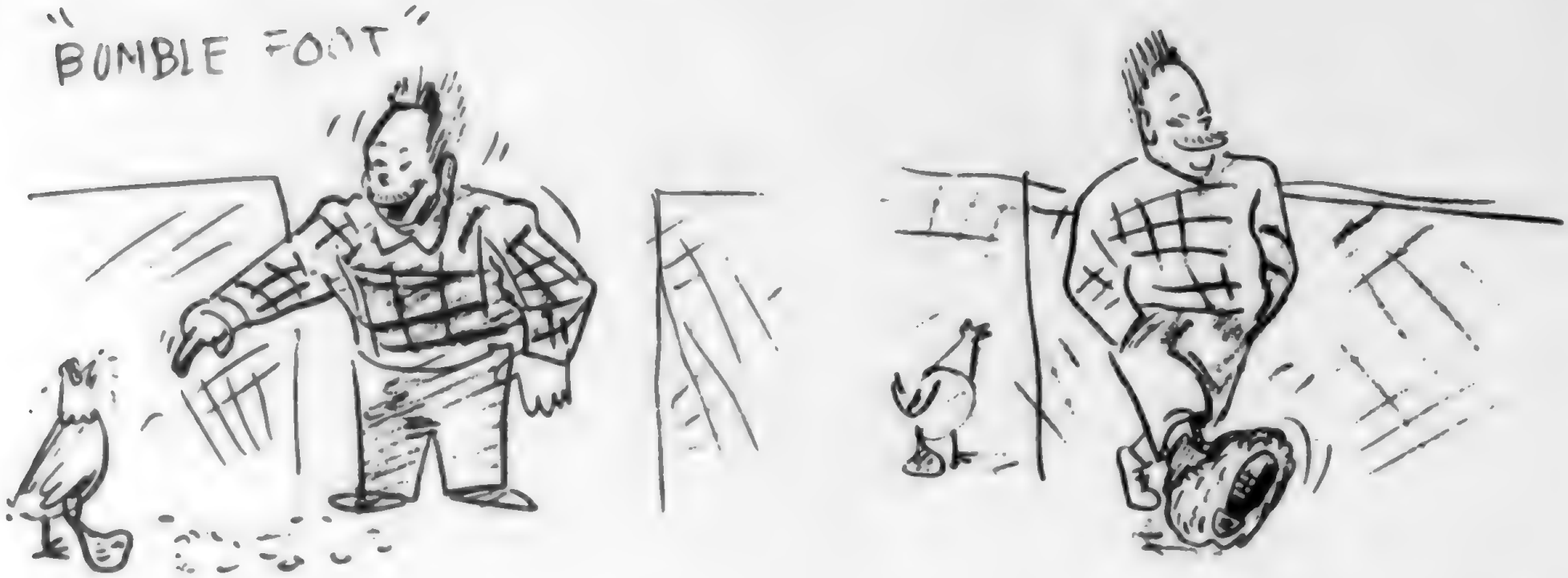
Adamson: I'm thinking of that wonderful shot where Timothy has decided that he can't fly, it can't be done; and he looks down and sees their shadow on the ground.

Huemer: Again, that's the result of analyzing and finding the most effective way to do it. You could take that whole picture and do every scene in it 20 different ways. Some might be better; although I can't think of anything in that picture that might be done differently.

Adamson: How were the songs in *Dumbo* combined with the story? Did you include, in your original synopsis, places where songs might go and what sort of songs they might be?

Huemer: I can remember one particularly, and that was in the Pink Elephant sequence. That feeling is written in there, of a musical nightmare. Ned Washington wrote the lyrics, and he would be in on the story meetings and would present his

A Disney Story Man's Mind at Work



"During the war," Huemer has said, "Bill Peet and Dick Shaw and I were car pool buddies, and we had many intriguing conversations en route, as you can well imagine. Know then that in view of certain food shortages, I was an avid backyard farmer and chicken and egg producer. Once I mentioned that I suspected that my flock might be coming down with the dreaded bumble foot disease. I have forgotten just what this consisted of, but the name evidently tickled Bill no end. Hence the grim sequence of events his imagination inspired. My flock fortunately was spared the hated and feared bumble foot as well as the better known roup. All during the war, we had more eggs than we could eat, and I was even able to sell an occational dozen to studio friends." In these drawings, bumble foot spreads to Joe Grant (third sketch), Roy Williams (fourth sketch), and finally to the entire studio.

songs, he'd tap them out with his fingers. Walt didn't have quite the grasp of music that he had of other things. That was one place where he was somewhat at the mercy of his musicians and lyric writers. If there was a poor lyric, he couldn't say, "Well, why don't we say so-and-so," because he wasn't a great poet or at least a rhymester, which it takes to be a lyricist, I guess. Nevertheless, I understand it was he who came up with the line: "It's a Zip-a-dee Doo-dah Day," which became a hit in *Song of the South*. But generally he just okayed (or didn't okay) a lyric or melody. A songwriter would mostly put his own work through just about the way he had written it. But he had to make it fit, which could always be done, of course. I've done that sort of thing myself, on occasion. For instance, we would say, "Let's write a song...a mother song for when she's chained up and Dumbo comes to visit her." Well, naturally there's some heart-breaking type of lyric indicated, and in this case Ned Washington came up with "Baby mine, don't you cry..." A heartbreaker.

Adamson: And the opening scene, that stork?

Huemer: Yes. It was suggested in a story meeting that we would show the stork with the baby looking for Mrs. Jumbo to deliver it to, and we thought, "Why not have a song to set up the stork on his mission." So Ned Washington came up with "Look out for Mr. Stork...that funny little chap...he'll come along and drop...a baby in your lap," and so forth. All his own lyrics.

Adamson: Why did the song on the stork have one idea, which was look out for the stork, and yet what was shown was a completely different idea: everyone's pleased as punch!?

Huemer: Oh, that doesn't matter. A lyric like that is sometimes just atmospheric. It gives you a comic slant on the stork and his business, and also the rather important story point—the happily anticipated coming of Dumbo. There are some songs which are largely production songs, telling a story or making a story point, like "When I See an Elephant Fly" which loses a great deal out of context. It advanced the story; that's what we call a production song. Whereas the stork number was just a nice opening theme with storm and stork flying, it gave you a nice feeling. We often did that. We were just trying to be entertaining.

Adamson: Why is there such a proliferation of villains in *Dumbo*?

Huemer: Well, villainy makes a background for the goodness of the good characters, doesn't it? It brings out the fact that the mother had to struggle in this nasty world, where everything is stacked against her. And little Timothy, the last guy you'd expect to help, the traditional enemy of little elephants (which is biologically untrue, of course) turns out to be the great benefactor. And in the end everybody is proud of Dumbo.

Adamson: Yes, but only after he's proved himself.

Huemer: Well, let's say that it's melodrama.

Adamson: Well, it seems a very sardonic view of the world.

Huemer: Well, you must admit that's how the world is. I frankly see no preponderance of good in it.

Adamson: Do you think that the film reflects your own outlook?

Huemer; No. No one man had that big an effect on *Dumbo*. Disney characters, and I don't mean chromatically, are always black and white, drawn very sharply, no grays. In cartoonland you're a villain or you're not. That was Walt's formula, also. As a matter of fact, it's characteristic of our medium — that's how cartoons have to be. Otherwise, they're wishy-washy; again, in my opinion.

Adamson: Yes, but if you look at *Snow White* there's only one villain.

Huemer: Well, that's how the story was.

Adamson: If you look at *Pinocchio*, it's about half and half. In *Dumbo* there is quite a paucity of sympathetic characters.

Huemer: It's inherent in the story. It's the story of an elephant that was born a cripple. Naturally, everything is stacked against him; the whole world is stacked against a cripple, isn't it? That's the situation, and if you don't show him battling against this situation, then you don't have conflict, do you? So in a picture which shows a cripple or a freak, you're more apt to have nasty people. The situation of the crows picking on little Dumbo was sound construction. Either dialogue or song would bring it off; but a song would be an oblique way of doing it, a pleasanter way, a cleverer way, a much more entertaining way, than just saying, "Look who's trying to fly!" In a song you can bring out all these points painlessly. Delightfully.

Adamson: Then there was the idea of ending the movie...

Huemer: The music? The idea of using a reprise like the "Elephant Fly" song is standard musical comedy procedure. And when you think about songs in the picture, that's the one that has the best beat, a good lively beat. That's a very good quality to end the picture with, and that's why we did it.

Adamson: Who did the voices for the crows?

Huemer: It was a colored group from the Hall-Johnson Choir.

Adamson: Did they react to the Negro stereotype business that you had indicated?

Huemer: You mean did they react *unfavorably?* Not at all.

Adamson: Did they think it was very funny, or what?

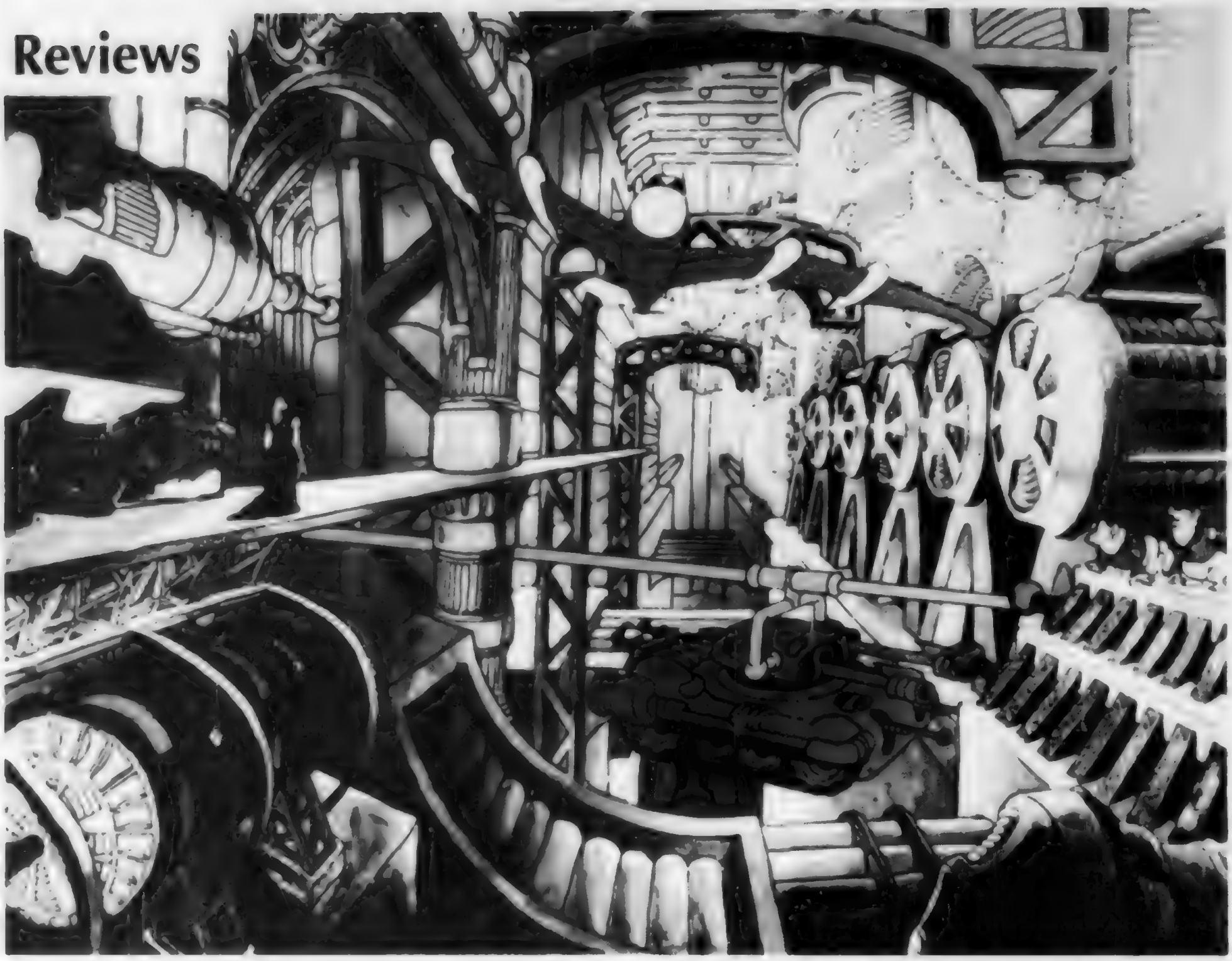
Huemer: Yes, they did, they liked it very much and enjoyed doing it hugely. They even offered suggestions, and we used some of their ideas, lines of dialogue or words, little touches. Happens all the time when you're making a picture. Somebody will suggest an improvement. The [new] material keeps accumulating all the time.

I don't think the crow sequence is derogatory. In fact, when someone mentioned the possibility to me, I was quite taken aback. I never gave that angle a through, and I still don't.

After Walt had read the article in *Time* magazine in 1941 about *Dumbo*, he met Joe Grant and myself in the lot and indicated his displeasure. He didn't think it was a very good article, not particularly flattering to him. As he turned away he said, "What the hell, didn't I have anything to do with the picture?" which is what the write-up sounds like, I must admit. But in a sense it was partly true, he didn't have as much to do with it as he did with his other pictures. And sometimes his withdrawal from a picture didn't work out well at all. For instance, he didn't have much to do with *Sleeping Beauty*, and to me it is one of our poorest pictures mostly for that reason.

FUN & FANCY FREE

Huemer: Peter and the Wolf was started by Ham Luske and put aside. Walt gave it to me and Eric Gurney, probably to make me uncomfortable. I was not in favor with him at the time. So I was stuck with it. I analyzed it, and found out why it hadn't been coming off. The whole trouble was in the introduction of the characters. If you play Prokofiev's recording you'll find the order of characters different from what we did. His order starts with the introduction of the wolf—and the whole key to the thing's working out was to move the wolf from first to last. We put the wolf last, let him end the introduction of the characters, so that when the narrator says, "And there was also a *wolf!,*" we segued smoothly into our story. It worked like magic. You couldn't have done that with the wolf coming along at the very start. So you see it was simply a matter, as if often is, of arranging components differently. And it worked like a charm. It's a good picture, helped tremendously by Ward Kimball's great animation of the huntsmen.



Blackwolf's munitions factory in *Wizards*

Lights Who Failed

By MIKE BARRIER

Wizards is Ralph Bakshi's fifth animated feature (the fourth to be released). It is also, on the evidence of boxoffice receipts so far, his first solid hit since *Fritz the Cat*, his first feature. His second feature, *Heavy Traffic*, performed respectably, but not as well as *Fritz*. His third, *Coonskin*, was delayed for months by a controversy over its racial content; despite the gobs of free publicity, the film sank like a rock within a few weeks of its New York opening. (It opened and closed in Washington so quickly that I have yet to see it.) The fourth, *Hey Good Lookin'*, has never been released, although there are recurrent rumors that it will be edited into a G-rated TV special or dropped in the drive-ins one summer.

Bakshi has set a record of some sort for distributors. His first five films have been handled by at least six—Cinemation (*Fritz*), American International (*Heavy Traffic*), Paramount (which dropped *Coonskin* in response to black complaints about it), Bryanston (which picked up *Coonskin*), Warner Brothers (which is stuck with *Hey Good Lookin'*), and now 20th Century Fox (which is, remarkably, releasing *Wizards* and *Raggedy Ann and Andy* simultaneously). Bakshi is slated to move on to United Artists for his next two features, a two-part animated version of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

Despite all of the trade-paper drumfire for the Tolkien project, it seems unlikely that the films would ever have been made (by Bakshi, anyway) if *Wizards* had bombed; even though Bakshi had survived two duds, three might have been too many. *Wizards* has reversed Bakshi's commercial slide, and has all but guaranteed that there will be several more Bakshi features.

Unfortunately, *Wizards* has also demolished any claims Bakshi has had to serious attention as a filmmaker.

Wizards is a ragbag full of other people's ideas. Worse, they are other people's *bad* ideas. Throughout the film, one dubious inspiration after another pops up; it is a festival of kitsch. Bakshi is heavily indebted to such artists as M.C. Escher and Frank Frazetta, and, above all, to the late Vaughn Bode, whose cutesie-pie, baby-talk fantasies have attracted a following whose enthusiasm baffles me. One of the principal characters, a wizard named Avatar, is a lumpy mixture whose ingredients are Bode's Cheech Wizard and Mel Brooks' 2,000-year-old man, and most of the other characters would look at home on the pages of Bode's underground comic books. Visually, the film has the integrity and originality of a second-hand furniture store.

Bakshi speaks in his own voice not through the drawings, but through the script, which is a jejune embarrassment. To begin with, he postulates a post-atomic world in which the forces of "magic" are opposed to the forces of "technology"— a conflict that would have seemed simple-minded in the Haight-Ashbury of 1967. Having chosen this feeble engine for the plot, Bakshi can keep it going with only the crudest devices—like having the forces of evil

whipped into an aggressive frenzy by old Nazi war films (which have supposedly survived intact for millions of years—tell *that* to your local film archivist).

The use of this old film is only one of the many cheats that Bakshi employs to get through the film. He also uses doctored footage from Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, lots of held drawings (by comics artist Mike Ploog), and gobs of repeats and cycles. All of this would be acceptable *if* the film's subject matter did not require a Disney-like richness, and *if* the film were not so shoddy in every other way.

As a writer, Bakshi makes a good street fighter; his idea of a satisfactory denouement is a kick in the groin. At the climax of the film, Avatar, the good wizard—the representative of the forces of magic, remember—defeats his evil twin brother Blackwolf by pulling out a revolver and shooting him, commenting as he does, "I'm glad you changed your last name, you son of a bitch."

It would be tempting—given the modern tendency to find irony in everything, and given Bakshi's own raucous irreverence in his first two features—to interpret this ludicrous climax as a put-on, and to talk about *Wizards* as a spoof of the deadly serious swords-and sorcery genre. Robert E. Howard and his imitators are certainly vulnerable to the needle. But trying to find in this film a satire, or even a simply parody, is a bootless exercise; it is, in its own dumb way, a serious peice of work. The comedy in the film is never turned against the swords-and-sorcery genre itself. Bakshi simply thinks that it's funny, for example, to stuff slangy anachronisms in Avatar's mouth; he doesn't use them to poke fun at the form in which he's working. Avatar comments on the action in an anachronistic way, but he never steps *outside* the action, as a character in a spoof might. Most of the comedy could have been lifted intact from a burlesque stage in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn when Bakshi was a kid. Bakshi, in *Wizards*, is like a filmmaking Lenny; he really does *like* heroic fantasies, but he is so clumsy and insensitive that he has squashed the life out of the first one that has come into his grasp.

Tolkien's Middle Earth is a remarkably vivid and concrete place. The settings overwhelm the characters, which is fortunate, since the characters too obviously have their roots in English boys' fiction of the 19th Century; Frodo and Sam would be at home in a novel by G.A. Henty. An animated-filmmaker who wanted to do justice to the books would attack them at their weakest point, by developing the characters, and thus not invite direct comparisons between the landscapes in Tolkien's books and the settings in the film. On the evidence of *Wizards*, Bakshi will do just the opposite, giving us a film full of overripe, derivative visuals and flimsy characters. It is not an appetizing prospect.

Long-time readers of *Funnyworld* may be surprised by my reaction to *Wizards*, since I admired Bakshi's first two features, and I wrote a long article about the filming of *Fritz*. Basically, I admired *Fritz* and *Heavy Traffic* for two reasons. For one thing, Bakshi worked in a rich and flexible visual style that seemed to grow out of traditional animation, rather than repudiating it. For another, Bakshi seemed to be in touch with his own feelings, as no feature cartoon-maker since the young Walt Disney had been. For the sake of these gifts, I could overlook Bakshi's chaotic narratives and pointless crudities, and his frequently glaring lack of some basic director's skills.

In *Wizards*, all of Bakshi's flaws are still on view—magnified, in fact—but his virtues have disappeared. Bakshi has banished the demons that made him a filmmaker of consequence; *Wizards*, unlike *Fritz* and *Heavy Traffic*, was made by a man with absolutely nothing to say.

Movies

Raggedy Ann and Andy was conceived by a couple of Broadway producers as a television special with live actors, and although it eventually was transformed into an animated musical, its origins remain all too evident. There are 16 songs by Joe Raposo in the film, most of them synthetically cheerful and highly forgettable, and they all seem to have been written to be sung over the footlights, or at a TV camera. They rob *Raggedy Ann* of what little narrative momentum it picks up.

The story, like the songs, has the smell of a failed Broadway show; it is a corrupted version of Johnny Gruelle's *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Camel with the Wrinkled Knees*. Gruelle's very gentle, villain-free fantasy — it is really bargain-basement Baum — has been made over into a piece of cheap razzle-dazzle, full of ugly, unpleasant characters. In Gruelle's *Camel*, the French doll Babette is kidnaped by a pirate who turns out to be a girl who never had dolls when she was a child. In *Raggedy Ann and Andy*, Babette — a very cold fish in the film — is kidnaped by the Captain, a small but real pirate whose motive can only be read as rape. When Raggedy Ann and Andy finally catch up to the Captain's ship, Babette is in charge, and is brandishing a whip, looking for all the world like the heroine of some under-the-counter comic book for leather fetishists. The Captain is in the brig, lamenting that he has been undone "just as I was about to pluck the flower of paradise...here I am, a man condemned by his own passion."

Frustrated lust is not a new subject for animated cartoons — Tex Avery made brilliant use of it — but it has rarely been presented so explicitly.

Raggedy Ann was born deformed; it was also accident-prone. People who worked on the film tell hair-raising stories about the mishaps and misunderstandings that plagued it.

Verteran animators Joe Oriolo and Shamus Culhane had prominent roles in the production in its early days, but both fell by the wayside before 1975 was out. Richard Williams, the Canadian-born director who now works in London, had taken charge by June 1975, when the soundtrack was recorded. For the next year and a half, he moved between his studio in London and the two *Raggedy Ann* studios, in New York and Los Angeles. The picture was announced as a Christmas 1976 release, but by the end of last year, *Raggedy Ann* was still not finished, the budget had swollen from $1.5 million to $4 million, and control over the final stages of production had been all but wrenched from Williams' hands.

It is tempting to paint Williams as the artist-hero in this unhappy episode, and ITT (which, through its Bobbs-Merrill publishing subsidiary, put up most of the money for the film) as the crass villain. Unfortunately, *Raggedy Ann* does not look like a ruined monument to a great film that might have been. Williams' ideas about *Raggedy Ann* appear to have been just as wrongheaded, in their own way, as those of the composer and the screenwriters. One cannot even excuse Williams entirely for the wretched score and the equally wretched story, although both were pretty well set when he started work. However grievous their faults, both score and story did offer the opportunity for lots of set-pieces for animators, and Williams evidently thinks that his major role, as a director, is to dress up such set-pieces and make the animators look good. Williams actually devoted many hours to cleaning up and inbetweening the principal animators' drawings, to give the film a more polished surface. Although Babette, the French doll, was animated by Hal Ambro, the elaborate renderings of her we see on the screen are from Williams' hand. The animators laid out and essentially directed their own scenes, even providing the background artist with background

layouts. (Some of the animators provided detailed backgroud layouts, and others provided none at all; most of the backgrounds turned out crude and muddy in either case.)

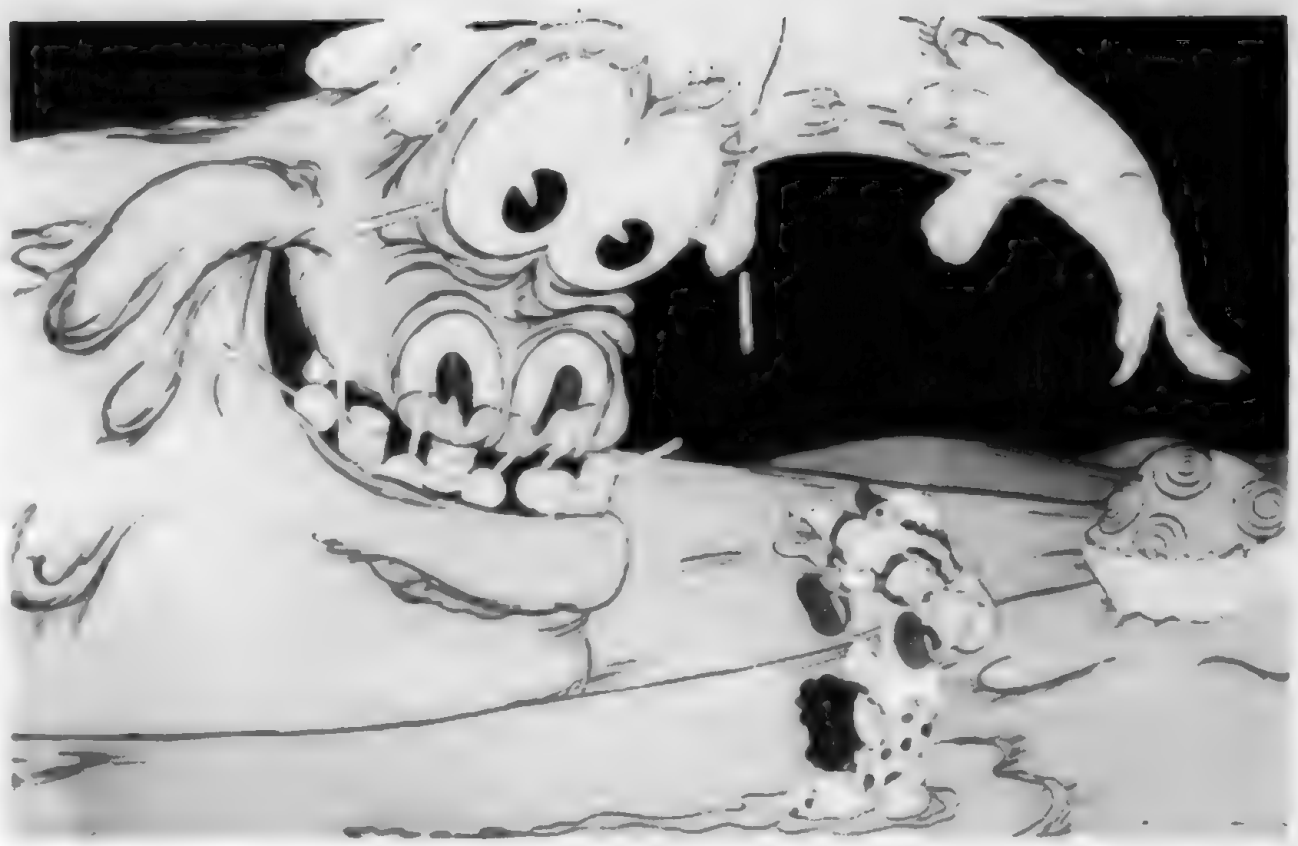
Williams frequently cites the Disney studio as a model for his animator-oriented approach to filmmaking, and it's true that the great Disney animators, like Williams' animators on *Raggedy Ann*, have always had considerable leeway in how they did their work. But they also had, in the Disney studio's greatest days, the support of battalions of other people. Stories were carefully worked out before they went into animation; detailed layouts were given to the animators, along with careful instructions from the directors as to what was wanted; every scene could be reworked until it satisfied both director and animator; ranks of assistants and in-betweeners were available to transform the animator's roughs into finished drawings; and so on. The animators stood on solid foundations.

Giving an animator lots of support is not the same as surrendering the director's prerogatives to him. This is a distinction that Williams has overlooked. If Williams had paid more attention to what his characters were supposed to be thinking and doing, and less to how they looked, his animators would have been better served, and *Raggedy Ann* could have been a better film.

For examples of opportunities lost, we need turn no further than the work of the three featured animators.

Raggedy Ann herself, as animated by Tissa David, does come across as a warm, floppy, cuddly character. (There are times when Ann — with her pop eyes, flat face, and crescent mouth — comes perilously close to looking like a friendly fish, but David did not animate those scenes.) There is, however, a contradiction: although Ann's *actions* are rag-doll loose, the *animation* of them is not. Too often, her many small movements — in hair, arms, body, face — seem to be discrete, and distinct; everything fits together, but each movement seems to have been thought out separately. There is no flow. Probably David had no choice but to animate Raggedy Ann in this way, because the character is so indistinct, in the story and in the soundtrack. David had to start from scratch. Had she been given a more fully developed character to work with, the results might have been much better.

Art Babbitt's Camel with the Wrinkled Knees suffers from a similar malady. Babbitt, in deciding how to animate the camel, hit upon the idea of animating him as if he were a vaudeville horse, with two men inside and an intelligent head attached, and with a rear that is slower and dumber than the front.



The Greedy in *Raggedy Ann and Andy*

This was a clever idea, but it created problems. The camel, after all, is supposed to be a toy, and not really occupied by two men. As a result, Babbitt could not animatr the camel as if there really were two men inside, nor as if it were a stuffed toy; he had to suggest both, without going too far in either direction. This was difficult, because, for one thing, the floppy cloth in which the camel is covered wouldn't fit over two men the same way it would fit over kapok or some other stuffing. At some points, the camel's stupid rear end is left behind, while the front walks away, so that the middle of the camel's body is stretched — but how should it be stretched? Should the center of the camel's body look empty, as if the body were nothing more than cloth covering two men? Or should it stretch as if the camel were a solid creature?

Babbitt's answers to such questions are not entirely satisfactory; in some scenes, for example, the camel's body stretches like rubber, rather than cloth. Much of the animation is relatively stiff, as if Babbitt were preoccupied with the problem he had set for himself, and paid too little attention to making the camel a believable character. That would have been difficult in any case, given the weak story and the camel's routine rural voice; Babbitt can hardly be blamed for finding something more interesting to do than trying to breathe life into an inert character. As with Tissa David, the lack of adequate support sabotaged a fine animator.

The only wholly successful piece of animation in the film is Emery Hawkins' animation of the Greedy, a huge glob of taffy whose shape is constantly changing. Significantly, Hawkins' work is enjoyable simply as a virtuoso piece of metamorphosis animation; it is never clear what the Greedy is, or what it does, and there's no reason to care. Metamorphosis is one of animation's oldest and most nearly sure-fire devices, and it is commonplace in TV commercials today, but Hawkins' metmorphoses stand apart, because they are sustained on the screen for several minutes; the changes never let up, and they never lapse into cliche. It is like listening to a tenor hold a high note for three or four minutes, in defiance of his physical limitations. Hawkins, unlike David and Babbitt, was given an assignment for which "pure animation" was sufficient. His work would have had even greater impact, of course, had it been used in a story that made sense, but it can still be admitted as an elegant bit of abstract art.

The Hawkins sequence falls apart at its end, for a good reason: Hawkins didn't animate it. Other animators had to be called in to patch together the end of his sequence when time grew short. The film shifts abruptly, at this point, from custom-made animation of very high quality to choppy, low-grade stuff. This was typical of the compromises and foulups that littered the trail of *Raggedy Ann* from script to screen. They would have made it difficult to turn out a good movie even if Williams' approach had been sound. But Williams had already made a fatal mistake, by failing to get under the skins of his characters. He seems not to realize that he must bring his characters to life in his mind before he can bring them to life on the screen. Polished surfaces are not enough; even mirrors are useless unless we can see something in them.

Ralph Bakshi, Richard Williams — both have been hailed as new Disneys, as men who will revive animation. Sadly, their latest films tell us that those hopes were misplaced.

The Titan of Hyperion

Walt Disney by Bob Thomas (Simon and Schuster, $9.95) completes a trilogy of "official" books on the Disney studio's history. Christopher Finch's *The Art of Walt Disney* (1973) came first, followed by Cecil Munsey's *Disneyana* (1974).

Thomas' book is very good in certain respects. Thomas had ready access to studio and family records, and he spoke with a great many family members and present and former Disney employees. The book gives us a very thorough account of Walt's early years, and it is moving at the close, when Thomas takes us through Walt's final days at the studio in meticulous and entirely believable detail.

It is in writing about Walt's middle years — the years that are of most interest to those who care about his animated films — that Thomas is weakest. Part of the problem is that Thomas is writing a book about Walt Disney, and not a book about the Disney studio; that is the book Christopher Finch was supposed to write. But the two are really inseparable — at least they were in those years — and having to deal with them as if they were distinct entities makes for a certain awkwardness.

The larger problem, I think, is that there were several Walt Disneys, and Thomas tries to write about them as if there were only one. The Walt Disney of the 1930s, pouring all of his energy and passion into the making of better cartoons, is an immensely appealing figure. It has become clear to me that Disney's ideas about animation had jelled by the middle '30s, and were shaping the cartoons released under his name; the steady improvement in the Disney cartoons of that period was primarily a reflection of Disney's own high standards. Disney was driving at a kind of animation that was not simply "realistic," but was highly flexible and versatile, and capable of dealing with a wide range of subjects. Just as his films reached this high level, Disney was betrayed by circumstances — the war, the strike, and ironically, his own success, which permitted him to build a studio whose layout worked against the feeling of intimacy and the group spirit that were distinguishing features of the old studio on Hyperion Boulevard.

As a result of all these setbacks, the Disney studio became, in many respects, just another company, turning out just another product; it was not the uniquely exciting and creative place it had been from, roughly, 1930 to 1940. The growth so evident in the studio's earlier films was stunted; the later films are, in many ways, simply more polished versions of what had been done before.

The strike was the crucial event, and it is still a tender subject among those who worked at Disney's then; its impact may be judged by the fact that Thomas — although he deals with the strike simply and objectively — does not mention its leaders, such as Art Babbitt and Dave Hilberman, by name. Bill Tytla, the only "name" animator besides Babbitt to take part in the strike, is mentioned only once. (Finch, on the other hand, quotes Babbitt in his book.) Thomas briefly describes the change in Walt at the time of the strike:

> The 1941 strike had a profound effect on Walt, shading his attitude toward politics and his relations with his employees ... he suffered disillusion in his plan to make the Disney studio a worker's paradise. The noonday volleyball games continued, but the snack shop in the Animation Building was closed. Workers had to sign in and out on a timeclock. Never again would the studio's creative people know the same free, intimate relationship with Walt that had existed in the studio during its formative years.

That "free, intimate relationship" had been lost in part even before the strike; it would have been difficult for Walt to have had the same "free, intimate relationship" with hundreds of employees that he once had with a few dozen. Like the head of any large organization, he inevitably became a remote and even forbidding figure to many of the people who worked for him.

Books

It was at this time that Walt was transformed — quite painfully, I think — from a highly appealing artist into a decidedly less appealing businessman. Great egotism and drive, when not directed at some worthy object — in Disney's case, the making of better and better cartoons — can degenerate into caprice; and this may have happened to Walt. He eventually became, through the amusement parks and other such enterprises, just as successful an entrepreneur as he had been an artist; but I doubt that the parks, although wonderful at their best, will be judged by history as accomplishments as great as the early animated features. It was our loss that the studio's momentum was broken in 1941, and never regained, but I think it was Walt's loss, too, despite his great success in other areas.

Although Thomas alludes to the change in Walt, he does not delve into it; the nature of his assignment probably deterred him from pressing too far in that direction. He relies on anecdotes, which provide only glimpses of Walt — and not necessarily the most accurate or revealing glimpses. For example, at one point he talks about Walt's supposed reluctance to fire incompetent employees:

> Walt rarely fired anyone. When an employee fell into disfavor, he was usually given a meaningless assignment and soon left the studio voluntarily. Walt employed a pair of writers who seemed to produce nothing of value. He admitted their incompetence and explained why they remained: "Because they always do a story the wrong way; once I've seen how they do it, I know the right way."

I've heard that story, from the same animator who told it to Thomas, and I know which story men he was referring to. (Here, as in other places, Thomas "purifies" an anecdote by deleting names; the anecdote may not be accurate but at least it's harmless. To avoid embarrassment all around, I'll honor the anonymity Thomas has established.)

There are several questions that this anecdote raises. Assuming that it's correct—that Walt really said what he was supposed to have said—did Walt speak the truth? I've read some material by the story men in question, such as their "treatment," or preliminary script, for one of the most popular postwar features, and it doesn't bear out the accusation of incompetence. If they really weren't incompetent, why did Walt say what he did? Before the war, Walt was capable of recognizing and rewarding talent even when it came in a prickly package, like Art Babbitt (who was one of the highest salaried animators in the studio when he went out on strike). After the war, did the quality of a man's work become less important, and "office politics" — massaging the right egos, including Walt's — become more important? Was Walt always *reluctant* to fire offending employees? Or was he perhaps reluctant in the '30s (I have heard more than one story about how he would shift a man from spot to spot, trying to find some outlet for the talent he believed was there), but not later on, after his attitude toward his employees had hardened? Being *slow* to fire, as in the case of the two story men, is not necessarily the same as being *reluctant* to fire.

Those are the questions that Thomas' anecdote stirs in my own mind. But for Thomas, reciting the anecdote is a neat, tidy way to sum up one facet of Walt's personality.

Much of *Walt Disney* is very good, and the book is accurate, as far as it goes (there are no footnotes, but many of Thomas' sources — people and documents — are identifiable from the text). At critical points, however, the book becomes soft and journalistic, in the pejorative sense. It leaves us with a great deal to learn about the most important figure in the history of animated films.

Experimental Animation: An Illustrated Anthology (Van Nostrand; paper, $8.95) is a handsome collection of pieces — interviews, articles, program notes, and so on — by and about three dozen avant-garde animated-filmmakers. It is actually two books. One, edited by Cecile Starr, is devoted to the great pioneer animators of the first half of the century. The other, edited by Robert Russett — himself an experimental animator — is about the younger filmmakers who have come into prominence in the last 25 years. Starr's book — or half of a book — gives us people like Fischinger, Reiniger, Lye, and McLaren — artists who always command our respect, if not invariably our enthusiasm. Russett gives us the likes of Stan VanDerBeek and Frank Mouris, and, in general, displays a marked preference for the pretentious and the boring. His standards are baffling — he includes Mouris, who is not even an animator, and excludes the Hubleys, whose work seems to meet the book's criteria — "individual techniques, personal dedication, and artistic daring." Fortunately, Starr's half of *Experimental Animation* more than makes up for the eccentricities of Russett's half.

"Eccentric" is too kind a word for the treatment afforded animation in **The Oxford Companion to Film** (Oxford University Press; $24.95), a long-awaited, vastly disappointing book. From the *Companion*, we learn that Betty Boop was created in 1915; Max Fleischer issued a film called *Hoppity Goes to Town* in 1939; *Fritz the Cat* was released in 1971; UPA was started in 1948; the first U. S. cartoon studios were set up in 1919-1920; Walt Disney's Oswald series began in 1928; *Flowers and Trees* was released in 1933; *Bambi* was released in 1943; Mickey Mouse first appeared as Mortimer Mouse in 1927; Walt Disney always provided Mickey Mouse's voice; and Bill Hanna worked for Leon Schlesinger at MGM in 1938.

Needless to say (I hope), all of these "facts," and many others, are gross errors. The book's emphases are peculiar — there are separate entries for Hanna and Barbara and Tom and Jerry, but Chuck Jones and "Ted" Avery are mentioned only in passing, and Bob Clampett and Friz Freleng are not mentioned at all. There is an entry for Frank Tashlin, but no recognition, in this 1976 book, that Tashlin died in 1972.

Someone named David James is credited as a "special contributor" on animation; I don't know who David James is, but I do know that he is wildly ignorant of the most elementary facts about animation history. Like the book's editor, James is presumably British; Oxford's American branch need accept little of the blame for this mess.

The *Companion*'s handling of live-action films is, to judge by the entries I've read, just as butterfingered as its handling of animation. I hope that Oxford clears this botched job off its shelves as quickly as possibly, and makes way for a revised edition. *Mike Barrier*

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Next issue: articles on Oskar Fischinger, cartoon voices, and Disney music; reviews of The Rescuers *and other new films and books.*

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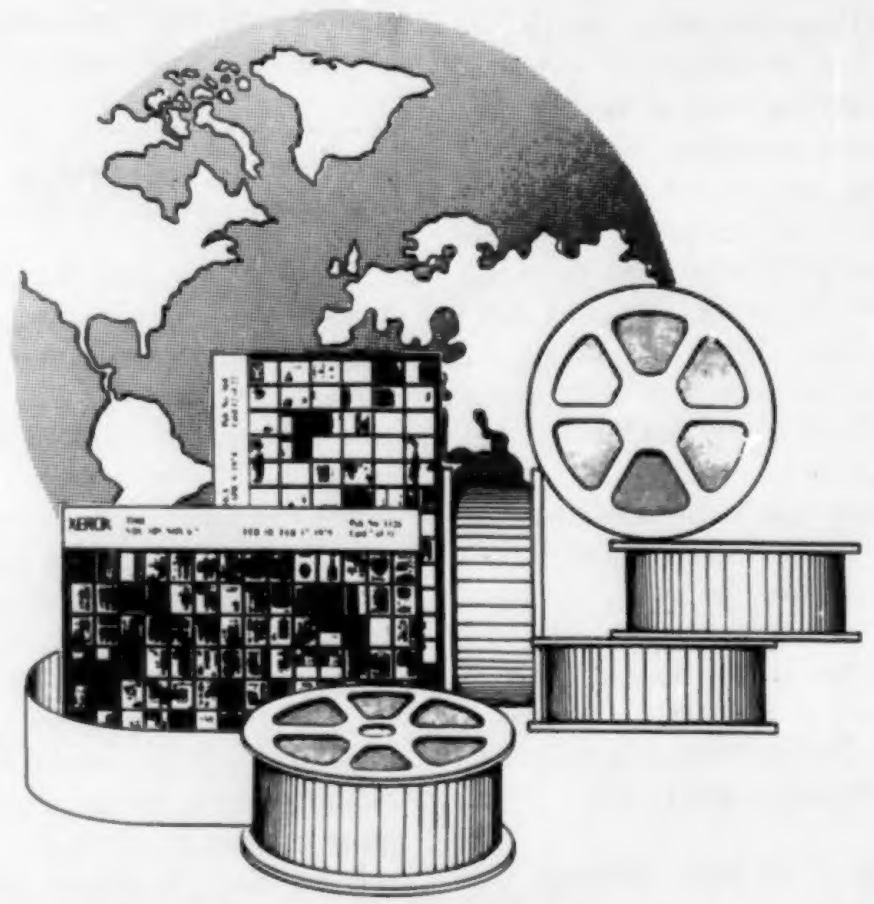

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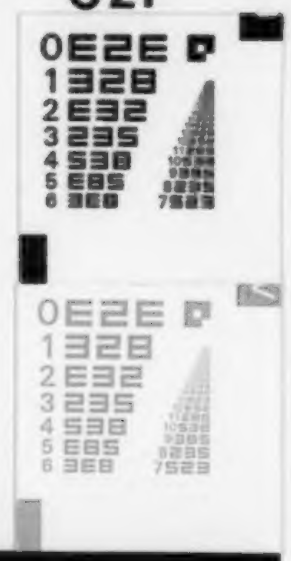
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